The Rhetoric of Naturalness: A Critical Study of the *gNas lugs mdzod*

Gregory Alexander Hillis
Palo Alto, California

B.A., University of California, Santa Cruz, 1979
M.A, University of Virginia, 1993

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religious Studies

University of Virginia

January 2003

ABSTRACT

Religious discourse, like other forms of discourse, is never fully separated from its social, political, as historical contexts. It may be that each of these forms of discourse is mutually constitutive of the others and represents an intersection of, or dialogue between, different, and often competing, discourses and vocabularies. Religious rhetoric is ubiquitous throughout almost all other forms of cultural discourse, and it should be clear to even the casual observer that religious ideas and beliefs are often used in pursuit of other, not necessarily related, personal, social and political agendas.

The Treasury of Abiding Reality (gNas Lugs mdzod) represents the intersection of several religious, philosophical, historical, biographical, political, and even legal discourses. It also may well represent the culmination of its author Longchenpa's mature thought, as it was likely his last major work. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is thus informed by a lifetime of experience, conflict, and reflection. The present thesis argues that in it, these various currents crystallize for a moment before moving on.

Using rhetoric as its principal interpretive rubric, the thesis addresses various questions not often raised in a strictly philosophical textual interpretation. In addition to being a presentation of a philosophical position, the distinctive "rhetoric of naturalness" articulated by Longchenpa and other followers of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism is a response to contemporaneous social, political and cultural trends. Moreover, elements found in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* derive from specific details of Longchenpa's biography. Using historical and literary critical methods, the thesis interprets the bold, often paradoxical, language used in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* as an instantiation of the broader social, political and religious conflicts in Tibet at that time

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART II

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As anyone who has lived through the dissertation writing process can attest, there are dozens of people to whom one becomes indebted, and each of them deserves to be thanked.

I am grateful first and foremost to the superlative scholars of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. I am thankful to Karen Lang and Paul Groner for their ongoing interest in my work and development as a scholar. Karen's and Paul's intellectual concerns have deeply influenced my own, and their friendship and support have been ongoing sources of strength and inspiration to me.

I am particularly indebted to Professor Jeffrey Hopkins, the founder of the Tibetan program at UVA, who guided me throughout my entire graduate course of study. Prof. Hopkins exposed me to a wide variety of Tibetan scholastic literature, instilled in me an appreciation for the importance of careful, thorough scholarship, and, most importantly, taught me how to read and translate classical Tibetan texts in private weekly classes. It is impossible to overestimate the profound influence he has had on my work.

I wish also to acknowledge Prof. Larry Bouchard, whose cheerful guidance made it possible for me to embrace the ideal of "methodological polytheism," and who taught me that I am a Buddhist in the sense that it is Buddhism I have chosen to be confused about. Larry's classes on hermeneutics and religion and literature helped me appreciate and understand my own discipline in new and unexpected ways at a time when I was seriously considering leaving graduate school.

I would be remiss if I did not mention how grateful I am as well to Professor Walter Jost of the English Department for graciously consenting to serve on my dissertation committee. Not only has Prof. Jost been flexible and understanding in his capacity as my reader, his training and expertise in the field of Rhetoric Studies make him the ideal person to sit on this committee.

I have similarly benefited from a variety of seminars and personal conversations with other faculty members as well, including David White, Georges Dreyfus, Ben Ray, Richard Rorty of the Philosophy Department, and Mark Edmundson of the English Department, to name a few. I have also had the good fortune to consult periodically with E. Gene Smith, the dean of Tibetan Studies in the US. Each of these individuals has made a significant impact on my thinking

and/or research, particularly in the areas of theory and methodology, and their influence is very much evident in the thesis.

I owe my greatest debt, however, to Professor David Germano. It was David who initially pointed me toward *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, and his enthusiasm for the text was infectious. He has spent countless hours with me, working through preliminary draft translations of the text, critiquing my work, as well as offering advice and support. Moreover, David's encyclopedic knowledge of Nyingma literature and his methodological sophistication have been ongoing resources and inspirations to me. I would never have come this far if it were not for his benevolence.

So much of the process of learning takes place in informal circumstances, with friends or colleagues at dinners or just hanging out. Hence, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my fellow students for their friendship and support. In particular I want to mention Steven Weinberger, Nathaniel Garson, David Need, Bryan Cuevas, Laura Harrington, and Tessa Bartholomeuz. One could never hope to know better colleagues, sharper intellects, or nicer people, and it is my honor to call them my friends.

I am grateful to the United States Department of Education for awarding me a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship, which enabled me to conduct critical research for my dissertation with traditional Tibetan scholars in India and Nepal. During that time I was extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to study with very highly regarded scholars in the Nyingma community. These included Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso, Khenpo Namdröl, Khenpo Wanchuk Tsering, and Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche, as well as senior students at the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute such as Chime Tsering, Nyima Döndrup, Karma Phuntso (presently of Oxford University), and Dorji Wanchuk (presently of Hamburg University). I also am thankful to the Department of Religious Studies for awarding me a Dissertation Writing grant, which helped me a great deal in the early stages of composition.

Finally, I want to thank my wife Maricel for her unfailing love and understanding during the entire course of my graduate student career. She didn't type the indices, she didn't proofread any drafts, and she only rarely renewed my library books for me. What she did do, however, is so much more important—she made our home a happy one.

The wise always accept an eloquent expression,
Even from children;
If a delicate fragrance arises [from it],
One accepts musk, although it is from an animal's navel.

Sakya Paṇḍita, *sa skya legs bshad* 1:30.[1]

CHAPTER 0NE: INTRODUCTION

Rhetoric is the general term used to refer to the art of written and oral communication. It also carries with it the connotation of *persuasion*, that is, language used by persons and groups with vested interests in the outcome of negotiations, conflicts, arguments, and so forth. In the Western classical tradition, stemming from Ancient Greece, there has been a history of tension between advocates of "philosophy," typified by the works of Plato, and those of "rhetoric," usually associated with Aristotle on one hand, and Sophists such as Gorgias, Isocrates, and others. The crux of the dispute between these two groups is the issue whether or not it is possible or even desirable to discuss "Truth" in its absolute sense independent of the individual viewpoints of those speaking of it, or writing of it. In this way, rhetoric has also come to have a strong association with the literary features of texts, and the way in which truth might lie within them. This debate between "philosophy" and "rhetoric" rages on in social, political, religious, and academic discourse, even until the present day.

However, I would suggest that our knowledge and understanding of a work normally construed as "philosophical" is enhanced by a fuller comprehension of the place and time in which it was produced. Intellectual discourses must be understood within these multiple social contexts, and the study of rhetoric is a robust and potent methodology for looking at those discourses in those multiple contexts. To achieve this, one must look at the "truths" of a text *rhetorically*, not in a negative, dismissive sense, but rather as seeing "truth" somehow embedded in those very contexts.

The dispute as to the relationship between truth and rhetoric is mirrored to a large extent in the academic study of religion as well. Within the field of Biblical Studies, for instance, there are scholars who prefer to concentrate on theological issues and there are those who prefer to study the "rhetoric" employed in the Old and New Testaments. Similarly, in the relatively young field of Buddhist Studies, scholars possess various methodological orientations toward their materials. One important strand of such study might be characterized as "philological," i.e., the

belief that the authorial intention underlying any given text becomes transparent to the educated reader, assuming that this reader is able to uncover the "original" text, uncorrupted by scribal errors, misguided interpolations, and other accretions. Another prominent methodological orientation to date in the study of Buddhism and Buddhist scriptures is what I would term a "theological" or "philosophical" approach to the materials. Such an approach seeks to understand the philosophical claims and counter-claims made in series of texts as existing ahistorically and acontextually, that is to say, divorced from the local and unique contexts in which they were created. Such a view holds that truth-claims within texts can have an objective status outside their cultural and literary contexts, and thus is opposed to the suggestion that the rhetorical or literary dimensions of those texts might have some intrinsic relationship to the objective truths they seem to outline, It is interesting that this claim constitutes a powerful rhetorical strategy in itself. While such methodologies can be quite productive in their own right, and help us understand various systems of thought and on their own terms, it seems to me that they also suffer from a lack of rich contextual details or, as Clifford Geertz might have put it, "thick description."

Religions, like all cultural phenomena, belong to these embedded contexts as well, and hence their "truths" and claims of transcendence must also be assessed from the standpoint of rhetoric. Religious discourse, like other forms of discourse, is never fully separated from its social, political, as historical contexts. It may be that each of these forms of discourse is mutually constitutive of the others and represents an intersection of, or dialogue between, different, and often competing, discourses and vocabularies. It is in the sense, then, that we can see how the rhetorical practices of a given age both form and are formed by their historical context. Furthermore, the ubiquity of religious rhetoric throughout almost all other forms of cultural discourse should be clear to even the most casual observer. The power of religious ideas and belief are often used in the pursuit of other, not necessarily related, social and political agendas. In the case of late twentieth to twenty-first century American political dialogue, for instance, we see many of the great debates of the day—abortion, sexuality, morality, education, and so forth—couched in implicitly, and often explicitly religious terms. There is no question that appeals to an individual's or a community's deeply held religious convictions serve as a potent means of persuasion.

If this is the case in our own culture, it is reasonable to assume that the same general principles hold in other historically and culturally distant contexts as well. And yet it may be that looking both at the theory of rhetoric and its practice on the ground, in a distant time and place, might well illuminate the embeddedness of our analysis of rhetoric, and hence open new horizons and areas of insight. Thus, the present thesis will look at the theory and practice of rhetoric, and the viability of rhetorical analysis in the case of religious language and literature in the culturally, historically and geographically distant fourteenth century Tibet.

Tibet in the fourteenth century provides a particularly interesting and fruitful site for study along these lines. It was an extremely volatile time in Tibet politically, socially, and religiously, and it is only natural that these various discursive streams should overlap and intersect in a variety of ways. Moreover, since nearly all literate discourse in Tibet was (and, to a large extent continues to be) couched in religious concepts and terms, it comes as no surprise that even the seemingly secular matters of state and military issues would be interpreted in pseudo-spiritual terms.

The fourteenth century was a time in which the one hundred year political and religious hegemony of the Mongol-supported Sakya (*sa skya*) School was disintegrating and the fortunes of its rival, the Phakmogru School, were on the rise. These political changes were accompanied by a corresponding shift in religious paradigms from local ritual-based orientation to a centralized institutional scholastic-based orientation. Not only that but a disproportionately large number of influential religious thinkers and authors were active during this period as well. These included Je Tsongkapa (*rje tsong kha pa*, 1357-1419), founder of the Geluk (*dge lugs*) School, Dolpopa Sherap Gyaltsen (*dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan*, 1292-1361), founder of the Jonang (*jo nang*) School, Budön Rinchen Drup (*bu ston rin chen grub*, 1290-1364), principal editor and codifier of the modern Tibetan Buddhist canon, and Longchen Rabjampa (*klong chen rab 'byams pa*, 1308-1363), chief systematizer of the Great Perfection tradition.[2]

Each of these figures, while ostensibly purely religious thinkers, was intimately involved with the political and social trends of the day. In addition, they were each prolific in terms of their literary output. It is my simple thesis that these works of religious literature right within their claims of universal truth and salvation reflected, in one form or another, the tensions and trends then prevalent in Tibetan society. It is through thinking about issues and possibilities such as these that I began to consider these ostensibly "religious" or "philosophical" texts as

participating in a larger discursive network, mutually informing and being informed by a wide rage of languages and vocabularies. I began to see these texts in terms of their *rhetorical* function—i.e., their ability to argue and persuade, within social fields of complex natures.

In the present study I focus less on a specifically Tibetan religious text's "truth claims" than on its ability to persuade, although it is often precisely the claims to validity found in such texts that makes them so persuasive. This focus on a narrow set of Tibetan texts may also serve to illuminate related broader tensions in Buddhist discourse as well, such as those between philosophers and rhetoricians traditions given to reveling in the literary nature of their texts, and those committed instead to a process of thought claimed to be separate from its literary expression, or between particular religious/intellectual traditions, such as between epistemological discourse and that of Great Perfection Tantras. Although both of these are doctrinal textual traditions, I suggest that their individual styles and vocabularies arose to address specific needs and exigencies, predicated upon ongoing discussions and conflicts with other groups. This general orientation towards the language used in religious texts allows us to begin to see how such language evolves as rhetoric.

As mentioned above, the term "rhetoric" also conveys a sense of learning and erudition. In general, writers, thinkers, and speakers in a given culture who are deeply versed in its literature and lore find it easier to express themselves in ways viewed as elegant and sophisticated within the culture at large. Rhetoricians, in a sense, are a given society's best writers, are those persons who skillfully build upon the literary tradition into which they project themselves. The best among them build upon their received traditions in new and creative ways, borrowing from the authors and poets who came before, but breaking through the constraints of slavish reverence for the past and tradition.[3] Thus, a writer like Milton can awe us with his command of scripture, mythology, classical literature, but do so in a way that is not merely a flat rehearsal of these source materials. A writer like Milton draws upon his erudition and command of a dramatic range of literary sources to express his own views, as well as to further his own intellectual agenda.[4]

One discerns the same pattern in the case of the most influential writers and thinkers in Tibetan intellectual history. What made many of the most famous Tibetan authors so influential was, in part, their stunning erudition and mastery of a staggering amount of scriptural materials. This is particularly true for authors from the period under consideration here—the

breathtakingly fertile fourteenth century. This is not to say, however, that all authors from this period were equally "literary" in their orientation—on the contrary certain authors, for example, were far more focused on topics traditionally construed as philosophical than they were on narrative, poetry, and so forth. In general, however, the level of literary skill during this time was extremely high due largely to the breadth of the major figures' education and training. Moreover, given that it is a core assumption of my thesis that *all* writing is in some sense rhetorical (i.e., concerned with style and persuasion), it is not unreasonable to characterize fourteenth century Tibetan authors as being skilled in rhetoric in general, depsite their varied interests and backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is wise to recall that certain authors (such as Longchenpa) were more engaged in the literary possibilities of their language and discourse than were others.

This "rhetorical" fluency is very much evident in the writings of Longchenpa, the author of the work we are to examine here. Even a cursory examination of his writings reveals how deeply and widely read he was in almost all facets of the Buddhist literature available to him. This includes not only a wide range of tantric materials then current only in Nyingma circles, but in the tantric literature of the "Modern" (*gsar ma*) schools of Tibetan Buddhism as well, not to mention more standard forms of Buddhist philosophy, ethics, poetics, ritual, and so on. In fact, in large measure it is his thorough knowledge of so many different areas of learning that makes his own language so persuasive and rich in allusion. Also, one must take into account his fluency in the various forms of stylistics with which he was comfortable, allowing him to shift seamlessly between different "voices" within a given text.

In addition to these features of Longchenpa's style in general, we find instances in his corpus of a tendency to use the language of Buddhist discourse to allude to specific historical and biographical events. These instances suggest that even within his most philosophical discourse there are underlying concerns that are not unrelated to these events. We find unmistakable examples of this tendency in several of his "lesser" works, including didactic fables, eulogies, and polemics. Among his major works, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* stands out as an excellent example of Longchenpa's inclination to weave details from his life and times into the fabric of a complex and nuanced philosophical treatise. Unlike other examples that integrate personal and historical circumstances into the discourse, however, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is subtle and indirect. Nevertheless, it is filled with remarkable assertions that in

many ways fly in the face of standard Buddhist discourse and that can easily be understood to function as a critique and a challenge to an array of different ideological counter-claims current in fourteenth century Tibet.

With these general introductory remarks in mind, let us now turn to a brief synopsis of each of the chapters.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This is the present chapter. It serves as the general introduction to the issues to be considered in the thesis, and provides synopses for the remaining chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF RHETORIC

In this chapter I attempt to describe how religious texts in general, and Tibetan religious texts in particular, may be analyzed in terms of their rhetorical strategies to interpret them from the point of view of history, biography, literature, or community. I thus present in detail the way in which I will use the concept of "rhetoric" throughout the thesis. The primary significance of the term for the purposes of the present thesis is that of *persuasion*, i.e., the case where language is employed to make a case for a particular vision through the knowledge of the audience's emotions, psychology, and so forth; in other words, how various visions of truth are argued for persuasively in religious literature. The secondary meaning I rely upon is rhetoric as style or *stylistics*, i.e., the analysis of how language is used to achieve certain aesthetic effects in different literary genres. I try also to demonstrate how the notions of rhetoric and hermeneutics are related and utilized by rhetoricians—first to arrive at a cogent interpretation of the materials under consideration, and then by employing that interpretation to accomplish one's aim or agenda.

I then proceed to a discussion of the history of the term "rhetoric." I begin with a survey of Classical Rhetoric dating from the fifth-sixth century BCE Greece. I discuss the tension between the negative understanding of rhetoric as the art of verbal deception and misrepresentation, as articulated in the works of Plato, and the more positive view of Aristotle that rhetoric is a powerful tool to be used in the service of the "good." I mention also the purely pragmatic Sophist view that rhetoric is a means to achieve one's aims. I examine modern exponents of these same views such as E.D. Hirsch, Richard Rorty, Stanley Fish, and so on.

The chapter then briefly discusses the problematics of reading ostensibly philosophical texts through the lens of biography. I critique the assumption that such texts are simply separate from the biographies of their authors. I argue that this is a misconception shared by both traditional interpreters, who tend to read these texts out of any contextual framework, and also of certain postmodernists such as Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes, for example, who see texts as products of socio-political contexts. In an odd way, both these groups of interpreters seem to overlook or deprecate the importance of the author's biography in the project of understanding the text's details. With the "death of the author" motif, a certain nuanced interpretation and dialogue between the author's life and the text is lost.

A possible alternative to these methodological orientations might be found in a sort of "modified" psychoanalytic criticism. Psychoanalytic criticism aims to show that literature is always structured by complex and contradictory human desires and power relations, not just by an ideal of formal unity or extrinsic social forces. While embracing this methodology uncritically might well create more problems than it solves, in certain ways it provides a more sophisticated vocabulary for the analysis of the relationship between an author and her texts than is otherwise available to us. For example, the relative virulence of Longchenpa's critique of the moral turpitude of the contemporary religious scene in his didactic works may suggest that Longchenpa was engaging in a form of transference, i.e., displacing his unresolved conflicts, dependencies, and aggressions onto a substitute object.

In the case of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, we can see definite connections between the language Longchenpa utilizes in the text and the details of his own biography. In certain significant ways, we discern in it Longchenpa's attempts to process and cope with the events and experiences of his own life, right within the literary achievements of a treatise devoted to a highly experiential esoteric traditions of Buddhist thought and practice. In fact, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is a remarkable text that instantiates many biographical tensions, which the author, Longchenpa, then works through within the medium of a dense intellectual religious system.

CHAPTER THREE: A SHORT HISTORY OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY TIBET

This chapter attempts to set *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in its historical context by tracing the events, trends, and personalities of fourteenth century Tibet relevant to its author. The chapter

attempts to set the stage for these fourteenth century events by briefly examining the preceding centuries. It touches on the important themes of the emerging gap between the "Modern" (*gsar ma*) and "Ancient" (*rnying ma*) Schools of Tibetan Buddhism, codification of rigid sectarian identities, the codification of a closed religious literary canon, the development of legal codes, and so forth.

The chapter addresses several important issues. First, it considers the matter of Tibetan "proto-nationalism" in the fourteenth century, examining the way in which different clans with various sectarian affiliations were jockeying for control of Central Tibet.[5] The fourteenth century witnessed the demise of the Sakya-Mongol religious and political hegemony in Central Tibet, with the corresponding re-emergence (rhetorical and otherwise) of the imperial tradition of Tibetan kings.

It examines the codification of sectarian identities taking place during that time in terms of communities, canons, and lineages. The period leading up to the fourteenth century was one in which many new sectarian traditions were established, and along with this was a corresponding burst in literary production. This included an astounding amount of scholastic, ritual, and revelatory literature. It then moves to an analysis of the rise of the large-scale monastic institution in Tibet during this period, specifically considering the issues of the rise of scholasticism and the system of the incarnate lama or "tulku" (*sprul sku*).

It also considers in some detail the fall of the Sakya hegemony and the corresponding rise of the Phakmodrupa sect. This development is of crucial importance to our consideration of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* since the social and political upheaval that accompanied these events had a dramatic impact on Longchenpa and his view of the world. This impact is felt in many of his works, but particularly in *The Treasury of Abiding* Reality. Finally, the chapter considers in some detail the circumstances of the so-called "Ancient or "Nyingma" (*rnying ma*) School during the fourteenth century.

CHAPTER FOUR: LONGCHENPA'S BIOGRAPHRY

This chapter begins with a discussion and analysis of the role of biography. It attempts to ascertain whether or to what extent one can read biographies across cultures. It raises the issue of the propriety of reading such texts not explicitly concerned with biographical issues, e.g., philosophical texts, didactic poetry, and so forth, through the lens of psycho-biographical

criticism. Also, the question of whether or not it is wise to read Tibetan biographies as legitimate historical sources is raised. The biographical literature of Tibet, as many have observed, is primarily hagiographical in nature, and thus suspect from a strict historical or "empirical" perspective. In addition, significant questions are raised when readers from distant places and times, such as twenty-first century Americans attempt to interpret these biographies according to their own cultural and literary expectations. Such readers might be tempted to attempt to differentiate between those factors that strike them as "historical" and those that strike them as "mythological" in Tibetan biographical literature. Indeed, from one point of view it is entirely reasonable that they do so and they could hardly be expected to do otherwise. On the other hand, it is important to bear in mind that the "authors" (whether individual or corporate) of these biographies made no such distinction. They included both these dimensions, but (unfortunately?) left no guidelines for readers to distinguish the "fact" from the "fiction" in these works. Of course, "fact" and "fiction" are culturally specific notions, and are themselves intrinsic to understanding a person's life or a people's history regardless of our perception of their "reality." Thus, individuals with a great degree of literary competence in one context may find themselves woefully deficient in another.

Here, as elsewhere in the thesis I argue that we are in a sense hamstrung by these theoretical difficulties in pursuing certain lines of thought. I suggest that we must first acknowledge the incommensurability of the disparate "horizons" of these texts and readers from other times and places, and then proceed to work interpretively within that incommensurability towards establishing fragile bridges of understanding. While at all times seeking to remain sensitive to the concerns of the tradition and its self-understanding, I also see no reason why a non-traditional critic/scholar/student cannot pose the questions that are of interest to her, if she does so in an intellectually honest way. Similarly, there is no reason why such an outlook should be construed as disingenuous or unethical. If people from traditional cultures are not inclined to pursue certain lines of inquiry, must that preclude all other modes of inquiry that fall outside of the traditionally sanctioned discourse? For various historical reasons the study of Tibetan Buddhism in the American academy is fraught with these sorts of concerns. Primary among these is perhaps the disproportionate number of scholars of Tibetan Buddhism who identify themselves as "Tibetan Buddhists." Tibetan Buddhism is characterized by the twin concerns with secrecy and strict obedience to the instructions of one's religious preceptor. These

features militate against certain forms of inquiry, especially those deemed taboo by the keepers of the tradition. Hence those scholars who identify themselves as within the tradition often find it difficult to pursue these questions, except perhaps privately with other initiates.

The chapter then continues with a more staid and less theoretical textual analysis of the available Tibetan language biographical materials for Longchenpa. I present each item in the order of its relative value as a source for research and discuss the probable relative dating of these works, as well as their possible inter-textual relationships. Finally I offer some general remarks about the sorts of details either included or omitted from the respective items.

The next section deals with a temporal overview of Longchenpa's life as drawn from the sources identified above. I look for the broad general themes and events found in a preponderance of the biographies, noting discrepancies and details found in only one source. In this way, I attempt to present a fuller narrative than might be found in any one text, one with possible tensions and discontinuities that would likely be glossed over in a single source. I consider Longchenpa's spiritual and familial pedigree.

From there I move to a consideration of Longchenpa's extraordinary education, including some of his "formative" experiences as a young man. I discuss not only the intensive training in scriptures, ritual, the arts, meditation (which were, after all, quite commonplace for a lama of Longchenpa's stature), but also specific events such as the circumstances surrounding his departure from Sangphu Neutok monastery, and his time traveling, studying, and practicing with his "root guru" (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*) Kumaradza. This section also includes some accounting of Longchenpa's literary career.

I then proceed to a brief consideration of the types of teachings and practices Longchenpa engaged in during the course of his life, primarily after his period of study. We find that although Longchenpa is known primarily for his teachings and writings on the Great Perfection Tradition, he also showed a great interest in other topics and practice as well, notably that of Monastic Discipline (skt. *vinaya*, tib. *'dul ba*).

Next, I spend a significant amount of time considering the contours of Longchenpa's biography. I speculate at length about the effect his background and formative experiences might have played in the formation of his character. I identify several key experiences, traumatic and otherwise that may have caused him to see himself in a certain light vis-à-vis other figures and movements of the day. In this way I engage in what might be loosely called

"psychoanalytic criticism," although with the proviso that such analyses are purely speculative, and are not particularly systematic in their application of a Freudian perspective. Several of Longchenpa's shorter writings, especially his didactic narratives, permit us an unusual glimpse of the way in which he viewed social and religious trends of his day. These works suggest that he may have viewed himself in quasi-romantic terms, as the unfairly victimized hero in a largely untold narrative.

Following this, I describe at length Longchenpa's problematic relationship with T'ai Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen (*t'ai si tu byang chub rgyal mtshan,* 1303-1364), the most formidable political and military figure of the day. Since it was the difficulties with Jangchup Gyaltsen that ultimately led Longchenpa to leave Tibet and spend approximately ten years in Bhutan, I describe in some detail the genesis of their conflict. In an effort to flesh out my narration of this relationship, I briefly consider the biography of Jangchup Gyaltsen as well. It is here that I draw attention to Jangchup Gyaltsen's intimate familiarity with legal proceedings, litigation, arbitrated disputes, and so forth. This feature of his biography, along with his well-documented conflict with Longchenpa, may bear upon the quasi-juridical language the latter employs in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. There is considerable variation in the accounts of Longchenpa's conflict with Jangchup Gyaltsen and his period of exile in Bhutan, and I attempt (to the extent possible) to account for the different versions of this significant episode.

Finally I consider the last years of Longchenpa's life, his last will and testament, and reconciliation (?) with the political authorities.

CHAPTER FIVE: RHETORIC IN THE *GNAS LUGS MDZOD*: AN EXTERNAL READING

Chapter five then moves from a general analysis of the factors and circumstances surrounding Longchenpa's composition of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* to a consideration of the text itself. Rather than delve right into an examination of the deeper analysis of the text, I begin by attempting to situate the text within a tradition hermeneutical framework. In a tradition that expends such copious amounts of energy classifying texts and creating textual taxonomies, it seems relevant to attempt to ascertain where the tradition, and perhaps Longchenpa himself, would place this text in the grand scheme of things.

In order to situate *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in this way, I start by tracing the major historical phases of Great Perfection literature, demonstrating how *The Treasury of Abiding*

Reality draws on each of these phases in varying degrees. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* utilizes passages and rhetorical strategies from the important text *The All-Creating King* (*kun byed rgyal po*), itself a composite of several shorter texts dating from the earliest strata of Great Perfection texts belonging to the "Mind-Series" (*sems sde*). The largely apophatic and aphoristic rhetoric that characterizes "Mind-Series" literature is found throughout *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, both in the form of citation and paraphrase.

The most well known subsequent literary phase of the Great Perfection tradition, the "Seminal Heart" (*snying thig*), also greatly influenced Longchenpa in his composition of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. This material begins to complement the aphoristic rhetoric of the Mind-Series literature with an increasing concern with the details of meditational practice. Among the classic texts for this literary phase of the Great Perfection are the *Seventeen Tantras* (*rgyud bcu bdun*), most of which Longchenpa quotes copiously throughout *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*.

I next offer an overview of Longchenpa's own literary output, drawing attention to his eclecticism and erudition. Although Longchenpa is deservedly most famous for his treatises on Great Perfection philosophy, his works span diverse topics as diverse as poetics, ritual, narrative, philosophy, and so forth. However, since it is works on the Great Perfection for which Longchenpa is particularly known, and since *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is classified as a work of that classification, I describe in some detail the hierarchical doxography of the Nyingma School known as the Nine Vehicles (*rim pa theg pa dgu*).

I then return to a consideration of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* itself. I attempt to locate the composition of this text chronologically, using the limited textual evidence that is available. I conclude that the text was most likely written during the last ten years of Longchenpa's life, and within that, most likely during his period of self-imposed exile in Bhutan. I argue that the dating of this text is important since it so clearly seems to be playing on themes of legal procedures and punishments that may well have been inspired by Longchenpa's problematic relationship with Jangchup Gyaltsen.

Next, in order to situate *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in its doxographical context, I briefly outline the Great Perfection system using the traditional Nyingma presentation of the "nine vehicles." In my discussion of the vehicle of Ati-yoga, i.e., the Great Perfection recognized as being the highest of all the vehicles in the Nyingma system, I enter into a preliminary

discussion of the rhetoric associated with this school. I suggest that much of the Great Perfection's most characteristic rhetoric of negation and denial is rooted in a dialogue with the older pre-existing traditions of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga. Mahāyoga tantras such as the *Secret Nucleus Tantra* (skt. *guhyagarbhatantra,* tib. *rgyud gsang ba'i snying po),* for example, propound such traditional tantric principles as philosophical views (*lta ba*), meditation (*bsgom pa*), conduct (*spyod pa),* and so forth. Great Perfection literature (especially of the Mind Series class), on the other hand, rejects these categories, stating instead that there is *no* view, *no* meditation, and so forth. The paradox of these rhetorical denials of advanced tantric practices is that, from one point of view, Great Perfection is intended only for those who have already completed these tantric processes with their complex meditations and rituals. Thus, Great Perfection rhetoric appears to be an intriguing intersection between aphoristic quasi-mystical appeals to experience, a polemical critique of the views and practices of all the lower schools, and the implicit assumption that the Great Perfection practitioner has *mastered* those very views and practices. Hence, as great a departure as it was from normative Buddhist discourse as it was practiced at that time, Great Perfection language is fundamentally parasitic in nature.

Having identified some of these strategies and themes utilized in Great Perfection rhetoric, I then proceed to attempt a modest inventory of some common rhetorical devices employed in its literature. I begin by considering the range of rhetorics found within the Great Perfection tradition. This includes the apophatic "natural" tropes employed in the Mind Series literature, the more practice-oriented language of the Seminal Heart materials, and finally the more violent and dangerous symbols evoked in the Crown Pith (*spyi ti*) category of Great Perfection literature. I then continue my analysis by attempting to create provisional taxonomies of Great Perfection rhetoric, concentrating primarily on the Mind Series and Seminal Heart materials and their prominent use of the "natural" metaphors. The general strategy employed by the authors in these texts seems to be to set up a series of polar oppositions such as "natural" (*rang bzhin*) versus "artificial" (*bcos pa*), "relaxation" versus "effort," and so forth, valorizing the former while deprecating the latter. Another typical strategy, clearly drawing on the Perfection of Wisdom (tib. *pha rol tu phyin pa*, skt. *prajñāparamitā)* tradition, is to set out a variety of sacrosanct Buddhist categories and principles, and then systematically deny their existence and/or validity. Other significant tropes employed in Great Perfection literature revolve around themes of primordiality, luminosity, unity, spontaneity, and so on.

Next I consider in both broad general terms, as well as in very detailed specific terms, the rhetorical strategies deployed by Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* itself. I demonstrate how the very underlying structure of the text may be understood as a subtle form of argumentation, and in particular how the creative juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory terms and concepts produces a creative tension out of which new meanings arise.

Finally, I enter into a discussion on the literary background and characteristics of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* that focuses on some of the underlying themes and structures for *The Treasury of Abiding Reality.* In formulating some of the key organizing principles of this text, Longchenpa was undoubtedly inspired by a short but important work by Śrī Siṃha entitled *The Sky-Soaring Great Khyung,* dating from perhaps the eighth century. Not only does the title of this work allude to the mythical "khyung" bird, sometimes identified with the pan-Indian *garuda,* with all of its associated metaphors, the text itself utilizes certain unusual evocative vocabulary that Longchenpa appropriates and integrates into the very structure of his own text. Seeing the connection between this and other "khyung" texts, I indulge in a somewhat lengthy digression that examines the range of texts connected in some fashion with the image of the "khyung" found within *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* (*rnying ma rgyud 'bum*). The important illustrated here is the multiple ways in which a single image or trope is employed throughout the range of Nyingma Mahāyoga and Atiyoga literature, showing both the relationship and disjunction between these contexts.

CHAPTER SIX: RHETORIC IN THE *GNAS LUGS MDZOD*: AN INTERIOR READING

In the final chapter I attempt to bring together all of the disparate lines of thought I have been pursuing throughout the dissertation to demonstrate that *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is indeed a text deeply embedded in the contingencies of its author's life and times.

Drawing on significant passages from the text itself, I offer alternative ways in which to read the text that diverge significantly from traditional readings. I begin with a series of "historical readings," ranging from an analysis of the text's subject matter in terms of the general historical trends, in terms of the details of Longchenpa's biographical idiosyncrasies, and in terms of specific historical trends, such as Jangchup Gyaltsen's re-insitution of strict legal codes in Tibet, and so forth.

Next, I offer a series of "religious readings" in which I employ literary theory and critical methods to explore the text's religious character. On the most obvious level, this will include doctrinal explanation and contextualization of the text's subject matter. In addition, the text makes allusions and explicit references to particular forms of religious praxis such as the practice of "breakthrough" (*khregs chod*) meditation on the primordial purity, and the practice of "direct transcendence" (*thod rgal*) meditation on the spontaneous appearance—i.e., the path. This discussion presents interesting problems in the sense that on the surface, the text's rhetoric appears to be *anti*-practice, but we nevertheless find passages referring to specific meditative techniques. Finally, I discuss in perhaps the greatest detail the way in which the language of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* sets forth it's own position largely through the inversion or *subversion* of normative Buddhist doctrine, rather than by relying on a propositional mode of discourse.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The seventh and final chapter summarizes and reiterates the main themes and arguments presented in the dissertation. By distilling the essential points made throughout the sustained multifaceted argument with all of its specificity, I hope to *persuade* the reader that the remarkable language and rhetorical strategies found in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* do in fact reflect a wide array of influences and concerns. Rather than to suggest that the text is incoherent or that it collapses under the sheer weight of its complexity, I will instead decisively demonstrate that it is a fascinating mosaic reflecting a plethora of influences, and that, far from being a distraction, these complexities enrich the text, and are in any event part and parcel of its overall *gestalt*.

---

1 *legs bshad byis pa dag las kyang/ mkhas pa rnams kyis yongs su len/ dri zhim 'byung na ri dvags kyi/ lte ba las kyang gla rtsi len/.* This is my translation. For an alternative translation, see James Bosson, trans., *A Treasury of Aphoristic Jewels* (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1969), p. 206.

2 All foreign language terms are Tibetan unless otherwise specified.

3 I am thinking of Harold Bloom's observation that in any given a society, a "weak" poet is one who is content to rehearse the tradition in more or less the same form it is received by her, whereas the "strong" poet is one who struggles against the influence of the past poets,

upon whom she has a necessarily parasitic relationship, to create something fresh and to find her own voice. See Harold Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

4 For more on this, see Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

5 Georges Dreyfus uses the term "proto-nationalism" to refer to Tibet's initial movement towards unification and national identity in the fourteenth century. See Georges Dreyfus,. "Proto-Nationalism in Tibet." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies.* Edited by Per Kvaerne, (Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994).

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF RHETORIC

Critical Theory in the present century has been characterized by ideas and practices arising from the convergence of several disciplines including philosophy, literary criticism, science, and so forth, which appear to reverse many long-held cultural premises.[1] Among the more dramatic of these are the demotion of foundational "truth," and the erosion of subjectivity.

Regarding the former, modernism has witnessed the dissolution of the ideal of positivistic objectivity in science and a loss of confidence in the neutrality of scientific and practical discourse. It is increasingly difficult to find a reliable standard of representational transparency—even so-called neutral "observation language" is now being recognized as being theory laden. Moreover, the history of science itself has come to be viewed less as a progressive discovery of facts than as a series of constructions within the framework of larger conceptual paradigms.[2] A similar trend dubbed the "linguistic turn" by Richard Rorty began in the early twentieth century in the realm of analytic philosophy that was critical of the tendency of philosophy to present itself as "pseudo-science."[3] The basic premise of this movement is that it is ultimately impossible and fruitless to "burrow beneath language to that which language expresses" since there is no underlying reality to find that is itself not linguistically constituted.[4] Rorty (and others) takes this trend to the next and even more radical level when he revolts against even his own earlier idea of language as the foundation of knowledge and the ideal of knowledge as a faithful representation of reality.[5] A similar concern is reflected in Jacques Derrida's critique of logo-centrism, a term he uses to refer to a belief in an extra-systemic validating presence or center that underwrites and fixes linguistic meaning, but is itself beyond scrutiny or challenge.[6]

Regarding the latter, post-modernism has also eroded the foundational characteristic of subjectivity. Nowhere is this tendency more visible than in the literary realm, where the (previously unproblematic) role of the author as founder or originator of a literary work is called into question. This destabilization of the author/subject is disclosed by recent linguistic and sociological understandings of the impersonal patterns and forces at work in human agency. The French critics Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault are perhaps the most influential critics of individual authorship and creativity. As we shall see shortly, these two thinkers both suggest that the "author" as a distinct and constitutive entity only emerged during the 17th-18th

centuries in dependence on various historical circumstances, one of the most important of which was the practice of punishing authors for what they have written.[7]

These trends have also tended to undercut such things as belief in god(s) and the capacity to resort to metaphysical explanatory strategies in the forms of various master-narratives, and so forth.[8] The insights of these so-called anti-foundationalist or anti-essentialist thinkers has been the source of a great deal of excitement among certain Western scholars of Asian Religions in general, and Buddhist Studies in particular. These movements in Western critical thinking are indeed important to such scholars because the insights they offer appear already to be found at some level in the venerable religio-philosophical traditions of the East. The doctrine of emptiness (skt. *sūnyatā*, tib. *stong pa nyid*) as propounded by the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika school may be interpreted as a radical critique of the referential theory of meaning, while the doctrine of selflessness (*anātman, bdag med*) may be understood as a Buddhist critique of subjectivity. In the domain of classical Indian Grammarians (*vyakāraṇa*), scholars such as Harold Coward, for instance, find many intriguing parallels between the thought of Bhartṛhāri and Deconstruction.[9] In the area of Buddhist Studies scholars such as C.W. Huntington have pointed out many interesting parallels between the thought of Candrakirti (c. 7th century) and that of modern pragmatic philosophers such as, among others, William James, John Dewey, and Richard Rorty.[10] Similarly, Robert Magliola has published a monograph investigating possible parallels between Mādhyamika philosophy and the deconstructive philosophy of Jacques Derrida.[11] Perhaps the most dramatic appropriation of these recent developments in Western philosophy is Robert Thurman's controversial claim identifying Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) as an incarnation of Mañjuśrī, the Buddhist bodhisattva of wisdom.[12] Such a claim, aside from whatever its merits as a statement of comparative philosophy, serves a dual purpose: (1) it implicitly suggests that Buddhist philosophy is more "advanced" than Western philosophy, and (2) it rhetorically enhances the prestige of an abstruse and remote metaphysical system by associating it with a trend in modern philosophy that enjoys significant cachet in modern academic circles.

Thus, given these many fascinating points of contact, the application of recent literary criticism methodologies to a Buddhist religious text might appear particularly auspicious. Here, however, I wish to suggest an alternative to this rosy picture in which the best of Eastern philosophies converges seamlessly with the best of recent Western theory. On the contrary, I

suggest that despite admittedly remarkable similarities, emptiness (skt. *śūnyatā*, tib. *stong pa nyid*), the Buddhist answer to the deconstructive theory, is confined to a philosophical arena where rigid dogmatic interpretive practices dominate. Hence, although the emptiness discourse of scholastic Mahāyāna Buddhism mirrors the rhetoric of deconstruction in many ways, in practice it is in many ways closely bound to doctrine and the institutional supports for such doctrine. Hence, rather than being the "liberative" discourse described by traditional and neo-traditional scholars, there is, as Paul de Man might put it, a disparity or tension between these texts' figures and "grammar," i.e., between their statements and their process or occurrence.[13]

Thus, in this chapter I will be looking in detail at Tibetan and Western histories of Literary Criticism and rhetoric as one way of looking into these possible intersections between Buddhist philosophy and recent literary-influenced movements in Western philosophy. The rhetorical reading of Buddhist texts that my thesis seeks to outline is not intended to deny the existence of referents or the referential function of the text's language; rather it is meant to challenge the authority of that referential function in the parameters of how we interpret that text's contextual significance. I will discuss a wide range of issues related to the notion of "rhetoric" and their relationships to religious discourse, specifically to the text at hand, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. This will include a general discussion of the Western rhetorical tradition, its history, various classifications, and so forth. This will then be followed by a brief consideration of some modern incarnations of the issues raised and disputed by the rhetoricians of old. I will also consider Tibetan materials that might be understood as functioning as forms of rhetoric. Throughout this discussion, I will attempt to highlight the intimate relationship between religious and rhetorical discourses. Finally, I will turn to a specific consideration of how these issues influence my study of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. I outline in brief the key factors contributing to the production of the stylish and unusual form of rhetoric found in this text.

Rhetoric is traditionally defined as the art of persuasive speech or discourse, especially of literary and oral composition, as well as disputation. Originally, as cultivated by the Greeks, it was the study of the principles and technical resources of oratory, including both composition and delivery. Its development by the Sophists and other professional orators eventually caused it to be regarded chiefly as the art of *persuasion*. From at least fifth century Greece onwards, rhetorical manuals have traditionally formed an important genre in Western literature. In schools and colleges rhetoric has come to refer to the study of principles and rules of composition

as devised by ancient critics such as Aristotle. Rhetoric has also come to be associated with elegance and embellishment in the realm of discourse, as well as insincerity and artifice. Hence, as John Bender and David E. Wellberry put it, "Rhetoric is the art of positionality in address."[14]

The question of *religious* rhetoric poses an interesting problem since religious discourse usually represents itself as being about "truth." All religions make absolute claims. Those who are not its adherents will naturally contest each religion's claims. This tends to result in sectarian conflicts, often played out in the realm of rhetoric. Such rhetorical conflicts even arise within ostensibly unified religious traditions, such that different sects of a single religion will often make competing and divergent absolute claims.

Kenneth Burke has pointed out that, whatever the unifying nature of religion to terms which all else might be "reduced," the history of religions has also been the history of great discord. Nothing sets people more at odds than the demand that they think alike, a demand quite at odds with the diversity of human lives and the contextual nature of interpretation. Even if we all repeated exactly the same articles of faith, we would understand them differently to the extent that our relations to them differed.

Burke goes on to state, "The subject of religion falls under the head of *rhetoric* in the sense that rhetoric is the art of *persuasion*, and religious cosmogonies are designed, in the last analysis, as exceptionally thoroughgoing modes of persuasion."[15] Burke argues that religions form in men and women the attitudes necessary to persuade them towards certain acts. In order to plead for such attitudes as persuasively as possible, religious figures always ground their exhortations, both to themselves and to others, in statements of the widest and deepest possible scope. Hence, the subject of religious exhortation involves the nature of religion as rhetoric, as *persuasiveness.*

Whether the mode of religious discourse falls under the heading of revealed scripture (e.g., the biblical tradition in the West) or under the heading of reasoned analysis (e.g., the Western religio-philosophical tradition), such discourse will make very strong claims to authority in its attempts to persuade its audience(s) of the legitimacy of its claims. Similarly, in the case of Tibetan religious discourse in particular, any new scripture of doctrine, if it is to enjoy any influence or credibility, must be introduced by one or the other of these modes: either by reasoning combined with scriptural justification or through the mechanism of visionary revelation.[16]

HISTORY OF RHETORIC

In an essay concerned with the issues of religion and rhetoric, it is important to clarify what it is that we mean by the term "rhetoric." The increasingly common use of this term in academic circles has a specific history, and it is worthwhile to spend a few moments considering its provenance. In what follows I attempt to sketch the lineaments of the history of rhetorical theory and praxis, ranging from Greek "classical" rhetoric, through certain Roman adherents to the art, and culminating in a discussion of contemporary incarnations of this ancient and venerable tradition.

HISTORY OF "CLASSICAL" RHETORIC

The English word "rhetoric" is derived from the Greek *rhetorikê*, which apparently came into use in the circle of disciples surrounding Socrates in the fifth century and first appears in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias*, probably written about 385 B.C. but set dramatically a generation earlier. *Rhetorikê* in Greek specifically denotes the civil art of speaking as it developed in deliberative assemblies, law courts, and other formal occasions under constitutional government in the Greek cities, especially Athenian democracy. As such, it is a specific cultural subset of a more general concept of the power of words and their potential to affect a situation in which they are used or received. Ultimately, what we call "rhetoric" can be traced back to the natural instinct to survive, to control our environment, and to influence the actions of others in what seems the best interest of ourselves, our families, our social and political groups, and our descendants. This can be done by direct action—force, threats, bribes, for example—or it can be done by the use of "signs," of which the most important are words in speech and writing. Hence, all literature is "rhetorical" in the sense that its function is to affect a reader in some way.

Aristotle defines rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any means whatsoever."[17] In the third chapter of his *On Rhetoric*, he distinguishes three types of rhetoric: (1) judicial or forensic rhetoric (*dikanikon*), (2) deliberative rhetoric (*sumbouleutikon*), and (3) ceremonial or demonstrative rhetoric (*epideiktikon*). Aristotle states that the principle of differentiating among these three revolves around whether an audience is a judge or not a judge of what is being said. By this he means that an audience either is or is not being asked to make a specific decision on the issue being presented to it. If the audience is acting as a judge, it is either making a determination about events that have taken place in the

past, in which case the speech is classified as "judicial," or it is judging what action is to be taken in the future, in which case the speech is called "deliberative." If the audience is not being asked to render a judgment or take a specific action, the speech is called "epideictic" (i.e., "demonstrative"). In later antiquity, some rhetoricians included all poetry and prose within this last category of "epideictic" rhetoric. For our purposes, such rhetoric is best regarded as any discourse that does not aim at a specific action but rather is intended to influence the values and beliefs of the audience. A rhetorical analysis of the *Treasury of Abiding Reality* employing these categories might appear to fall primarily under this last rubric of "epideictic" rhetoric, and indeed it does to a great extent. Nevertheless, it can also be said that all Buddhist discourse is seeking to persuade its audience to subscribe to its peculiar worldview, and having done so, asking them to make a decision about the future on the basis of that (namely to discard worldly existence and strive to attain liberation). To that extent, then, both forensic and deliberative rhetorics are important components in the overall rhetorical strategy of Buddhist texts. In the case of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, I would suggest that Longchenpa is certainly using deliberative rhetoric inasmuch as he is urging the reader to relax, "let go," rest in the sphere of reality, and so forth, in terms of future activities, contemplation, and so on. At any rate, in practice it is not so easy to differentiate between these types of rhetoric, and what we might think of as simply demonstrative rhetoric ends up containing elements of both judicial and deliberative rhetoric as well.

In its fully developed form, as seen for example in the works of Circero in the first century B.C. and of Quintillian a century later, classical rhetoric consisted of five parts that parallel the act of planning and delivering a speech. The first of these five parts is "invention" (Gk. *heuresis*, Lat. *inventio*). This is concerned with thinking through the subject matter, i.e., identifying the key questions and issues, as well as the means for persuading the audience to accept one's position on these issues. Means of persuasion include use of direct evidence, such as witnesses and contracts, and "artistic" means of persuasion such as the presentation of the speaker's character (*ethos*) as trustworthy, logical argument (*logos*) that may convince the audience, and the emotion (*pathos*) that the speaker can awaken in the audience.

The second category of classical rhetoric is "arrangement" (Gk. *taxis*, Lat. *dispositio*). "Arrangement" means the organization of a speech or writing into parts, though the order in which arguments are presented (e.g., whether the strongest argument is presented first or

toward a climax) is somewhat flexible. This category's basic divisions are: (1) introduction (Gk. *prooimion*, Lat. *exordium*); (2) narration (Gk. *diegesis*, Lat. *narratio*), the exposition of the background and factual details; (3) proof (Gk. *pistis*, Lat. *probatio*); and (4) conclusion or epilogue (Gk. *epilogos*, Lat. *peroratio*). Each part has its own specific purpose and characteristics. The introduction, for instance, aims at securing the interest and good will of the audience; the narration should be clear, brief, and persuasive; the proof provides logical arguments in support of the speaker's position and seeks to refute any objections that might be made against it; and the conclusion offers a recapitulation and emotional appeal to the audience. These categories relate primarily to "judicial" speeches; "deliberative" speeches can often omit narration, and "epideictic" speeches have a structure of their own in which the speaker takes up various topics such as ancestry, education, character, conduct, and so forth.

Once the speaker has planned "what" to say and the order in which to say it, the third task is to decide "how" to say it, that is, how to embody it in words and sentences. This is called "style" (Gk. *lexis*, Lat. *elocutio*). Style is considered to be a deliberate process of casting a particular subject into language—the same ideas can be expressed in different words with different effect. Style here has two divisions: "diction," or the choice of words, and "composition," the putting of words together into sentences. The latter includes periodic structure, prose rhythm, and figures of speech. "Style" is usually discussed in terms of the four "virtues" (*aretai*): correctness of grammar and usage, clarity, ornamentation, and propriety. Ornamentation includes tropes, metaphor, figures of speech, or changes in the sequence or sound of words, such as anaphora or asyndeton. It also includes figures of thought, in which a statement is recast to place stress upon it or achieve audience contact, as in the rhetorical question.

Invention, arrangement, and style are the three most important parts of classical rhetoric, equally applicable to public speaking and written composition. In succeeding centuries, however, additional parts such as "memory" and "delivery" were added to this list that were exclusively concerned with public speaking. The former included a mnemonic system of backgrounds and images developed for the purpose of aiding the student of rhetoric to memorize his or her speech word for word for oral delivery, while the latter is divided into control of the voice (volume, pitch, and so forth) and gesture, which includes control of the eyes, limbs, and so forth.

In addition to these forms used in the service of argumentation, rhetoricians are concerned with psychology. A rough understanding of the psychology and beliefs of various types of audiences not only serve as instruments of persuasion, they can also provide the premises for all sorts of argumentation. Aristotle distinguishes three interconnected psychological dimensions of persuasion: character (*êthos*), emotion (*pathos*), and reason (*logos*). Regarding the first, a person's character "consists of long-standing actively dispositional qualities and traits—his natural capacities and habits—that (by setting the general direction of his desires and the range of his passions) direct his choices."[18] Since such choices require the conjunction of thought and desire, the rhetorician must influence the desires as well as the beliefs of his audience. Hence, it is appropriate for the rhetorician to address the character of the audience, linking the character and desires of his audience to the decisions and actions he wants them to take. While Aristotle stresses the active aspect of character, i.e., that a person's individual dispositions will actively form and direct his or her perceptions, thoughts, and desires, he sees the emotions as deriving from changes brought about through external causes. The rhetorician evokes these emotion-laden memories, and, having aroused their indignation or emulation, for example, he or she can then direct the audience's feelings of revenge or competition to actions that appear to satisfy long-standing attitudes and desires. Finally, the rhetorician may well be able to sway his or her audience by shrewdly assessing their character and playing upon their emotions, but the results of such persuasive techniques may prove short-lived or unstable, because they are always susceptible to another equally moving form of persuasion. Rhetorical arguments, while appearing reasonable, often take non-syllogistic routes working through feelings and emotions, as well as simile, analogy, and metaphor; the conclusions drawn from such arguments may be correspondingly unstable. Hence the skillful rhetorician seeks to stabilize the specific emotions and their attendant desires that will lead the audience to believe and act in the manner he or she wishes. To bind the convictions of the audience, the rhetorician must appeal to their most deeply entrenched, as well as to their most immediate, desires and interests, and this often may be achieved through appealing to the seeming infallibility of science and reason. We should bear in mind, however, that Aristotle does not share Plato's distaste for and suspicion of metaphors, analogies, and similes. While acknowledging that such tropes can elicit feelings rather than reason, Aristotle "nevertheless thinks that metaphor and myth can serve as didactic instruments for those who cannot be persuaded by strictly logical argumentation."[19] Indeed,

"truth" and emotion" need not be as much at odds as some would have us believe, and in many cases "emotion" may, or even *must*, disclose truth.

PHILOSOPHY VS. RHETORIC (PLATO VS. SOPHISTS)

Just as today the term "rhetoric" in popular usage can have negative connotations as deceitful or empty speech, the teaching of rhetoric was also called into question in classical times. The earliest context in which this criticism appears is the *Clouds* by Aristophanes, a comic play originally staged in 423 B.C. at the height of the activity of the older Sophists.[20] The play includes a debate between "Just Speech" and "Injust Speech" in which injustice acknowledges itself to be the "weaker" of the two, but triumphs over the "stronger" justice by means of verbal trickery. This expression, "making the weaker argument the stronger," reflects the frustration of those unskilled in the emerging techniques of debate; traditional notions of morality and truth were undermined by verbal argument and its apparent proofs of paradoxical views that seemed wrong to common sense. However, although making the weaker argument the stronger can certainly be open to objections on moral grounds, the discovery in the fifth century B.C. of the possibilities of logical argument, and thus willingness to ask new questions, proved fundamental to scientific progress and social and political change in later centuries.

The most influential critic of rhetoric was Plato, especially in the dialogue *Gorgias*. The word *rhetor* in Greek means a public speaker, but for Plato it had the more dubious connotation of a "politician." Thus, the abstraction *rhetorikê* could be represented as the dubious technique of politicians in contrast to the nobler study of philosophy that has its basis in "truth." Socrates in the *Gorgias* specifically addresses his criticism of rhetoric to the fifth century B.C. political orator Gorgias and his follower Polus. Gorgias was one of several traveling lecturers known as "sophists," or wise men, who sought to teach techniques for civil success, including what would later come to be known as rhetoric. Sophists as a group were philosophical relativists, skeptical about the knowledge of universal truth. One of the surviving works by Gorgias, entitled *On Nature*, argues that nothing exists, that if it does not exist it cannot be known, and that even if it could be known, it could not be communicated from one person to another. The consequence of this position is that the value of opinions about what is true, right, or just should be judged from the circumstances as understood by individuals at a particular time. Although such a position opens up the possibility of making "the weaker cause the stronger," it also allows for the use of

rhetoric in debate and the need to argue both sides of a case as persuasively as possible in order to determine the best course of action. Socrates in *Giorgias* and in other dialogues of Plato as well, contends that there is such a thing as absolute truth and universal principles of right and wrong. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates describes rhetoric as a form of flattery and a sham counterpart to justice. In a later dialogue contained in the *Phaedrus*, however, Plato has Socrates describe the possibility of a valid, philosophical rhetoric that would be based on knowledge of the truth, logical method, and the psychology of the audience (277b5-c6). Aristotle eventually provided what was probably the best solution by demonstrating that rhetoric, like dialectic, is a morally neutral art that can be used, like reason, to get at the "truth." For Aristotle, rhetoric properly used, is a heuristic tool helping us not to distort the facts, but to discover them. Thus, Aristotle effectively re-introduces the notion of an independent, verifiable reality in his defense of rhetoric, thus rejoining it to "that very realm of which it was said to be the great subverter."[21]

BETWEEN "TRUTH" VS. INTERPRETATION

The chief accusation against rhetoricians was that they hold the probable (or likely-seeming, plausible) in higher esteem than the true. The Sophists responded that it is the realm of the probable—that which is likely to happen in a given set of specific circumstances—that is the only relevant realm of consideration for human beings. Protogoras's famous assertion that "man is the measure of all things, of the things that are that they are, and of the things that are not that they are not" (quoted in Plato, *Theaetetus*, 152a) provides perhaps the most unambiguous statement of the sophists' anti-foundationalist stance. This is not to say that the categories of the good and the true have been abandoned, but these categories will be filled various ways depending on the context, and that there is not a master-context from the vantage point of which such differences could be assessed and judged.

The result of this line of thought is that rhetoric moves from the periphery of valid discourse to the center, since now the highest truth for any man is what he believes it to be (*Theaetetus*, 152a), and rhetoric—the skill which produces belief and therefore establishes what is true in a particular time and place—becomes the essential skill in building and maintaining a society. Here, of course, terms like "good" and "best" do not mean what Plato and Socrates want them to mean, i.e., good and best in any and all circumstances. Rather they refer to what would seem to be the better of the courses from within the circumstantial constraints of a particular situation.

MODERN USES AND APPROPRIATIONS OF THE TERM "RHETORIC"

In recent decades, renewed interest in rhetoric has surfaced in a wide range of conferences and publications across a number of academic disciplines. This interest is evident in the establishment of university press series on rhetorical theory, the founding of learned societies, and the development of new periodicals. Besides the growth of traditionally rhetorical academic fields such as Literature, Communications, and so forth, a number of other disciplines have been significantly affected by the "rhetorical turn" in the humanities and social sciences, including philosophy, law, anthropology, and even economics. Moreover, this general turn toward rhetoric has been accompanied by modern versions of the same basic controversies as those between Plato and the Sophists mentioned above. In the following section I will briefly consider some of the more recent incarnations of the ancient hostility between philosophy and rhetoric.

Stanley Fish demonstrates how critiques of rhetoric employ implicit binary oppositions (themselves rhetorical devices) between a single truth independent of perspectives and many "truths," between "true" knowledge and partial knowledge, and between a self or consciousness turned outwards in an effort to apprehend truth and a self or consciousness turned inward toward its own prejudices. These oppositions are in turn based on an opposition between language that faithfully reflects and reports reality and language infected by partisan agendas and desires which tend to distort the "facts."[22] Thomas Kuhn notes that it is this distinction that underwrites the claims of science to be a privileged form of discourse because it has recourse to a "neutral observation language" untainted by any presuppositions or prejudices.[23] Fish and Kuhn, however, reject this claim: "Whatever reports a particular language (natural or artificial) offers us will be the report on the world as it is seen from within some particular situation; there is no other aperspectival way to see and no language other than a situation-dependent language—an interested, rhetorical language—in which to report."[24]

The suggestion that such reports will always be couched in an interested, partisan, *rhetorical* language has interesting ramifications for the study of religious texts. First, it compels the modern-day interpreter of temporally and conceptually distant texts to confront his or her scholarly presuppositions. More importantly in the context of the present discussion, it allows those of us who are engaged in the study of Buddhist religious literature to understand the doctrinal truth-claims inevitably made in these texts as being statements of partisan, interested,

culturally and historically contingent authors whose implicit goal in composing the texts was to persuade a particular audience of the validity, or at least *appropriateness* of their views over against other, competing views. Thus, we may employ Michel Foucault's "strategies of reversal" in reading texts ostensibly concerned with the ahistorical Buddhist project of attaining enlightenment in terms of social and political exigencies by looking at "enlightenment" as a term or concept reinvented at different times for different ends.[25] Moreover, since such a text(s) is an instantiation of discursive practice, it reverberates with "the features of asymmetry, inequality, domination, and the like in its particular historical and cultural setting...."[26]

TIBETAN RHETORICAL PRACTICES

The aim of this section is to begin to develop a typology of Tibetan rhetoric, as well as to explore some of the problems inherent in such a project. My interest in this project arises from my ongoing attempts to understand Tibetan religious texts as sites for the deployment of peculiarly Tibetan forms of rhetoric, and as constituting and being constituted by larger rhetorical/discursive fields. I am increasingly aware of my own tendency to use Western and specifically Greek constructs to interpret Tibetan texts. Nevertheless, Tibetans themselves possess a rich tradition of literary criticism and rhetoric with its attendant terminology and conceptual categories. This tradition was assimilated, with relatively few modifications, from Indian traditions of aesthetic theory. Since I find more productive answers to the sorts of interpretive questions I am posing to the Great Perfection tradition in general and *The Treasury of Abiding* Reality in particular through employing Greek and Western rhetorical principles, in general I rely on them in my own interpretations. Even so, it is also important to take into account the way in which a text is interpreted in its own cultural context, and hence I also try, to the extent possible, to integrate relevant perspectives from the indigenous tradition. In other words, whereas I utilize methodologies deriving from the western rhetorical traditions in my pursuit of social, historical, and biographical questions, I remain alive to indigenous strategies for eliciting meaning from the text. Hence, my modest goal here is to provide an overview of Tibetan critical practices, and how we might analyze Tibetan literature in terms of Euro-American traditions of rhetoric, both theory and practice.[27]

DEFINING RHETORIC

The question of whether or to what extent one can speak legitimately of 'Tibetan Rhetoric' present several daunting problems. The first of these is certainly the issue of what the term "rhetoric" refers to in the English language. Some might argue that "rhetoric" is a peculiarly Western phenomenon, a structured system of teaching public speaking and written composition that was developed in ancient Greece and taught from Roman times though the Medieval, Renaissance, and Early Modern eras. From this point of view, "rhetoric" is indeed a culturally specific phenomenon.[28] This, however, is only one meaning of "rhetoric." As we have seen above, Aristotle argues that rhetoric refers to persuasion in reference to anything at all. Rhetoric in this broader sense would be a universal phenomenon since individuals everywhere attempt to persuade others to perform or refrain from certain actions, and adopt or discard certain beliefs. Paul Ricoeur argues that the principal feature of rhetoric is the rivalry of opposing discourses between which one is compelled to choose. In every case, the idea is to get one judgment to prevail over the other.[29] Thus, rhetoric may be understood in its most fundamental sense as the art of *argumentation.*

However, rhetoric in the West refers not only to the art of persuading others through the skillful manipulation of language, but to stylistics, i.e., the study of different styles, as well as their significance and use. In addition, rhetorical criticism—the interpretation and evaluation of rhetorical texts or performances that takes into account the relationships that exist between the speaker or writer, the performance or text, and the audience or reader—has an ancient pedigree as an important element of literary criticism. Finally, in the twentieth century literary criticism in the West has taken a strong turn towards concern with interpreting literary, philosophical, or religious texts in terms of socio-historical and biographical contexts, as well as in terms of latent political and sexual resonances.

Hence, for our purposes a functional definition of "rhetoric" would be, "the art of expressive speech or discourse, including theories of style and composition," or, more simply, "the art of persuasion or argumentation." Furthermore, this basic definition may be expanded to include a critical dimension, i.e., the evaluation of texts in terms of their rhetorical function.

SUITABLE TIBETAN TRANSLATIONS OF THE TERM "RHETORIC"

A second difficult problem in the creation of a typology of Tibetan rhetoric is identifying a specific term (or terms) in the Tibetan language that corresponds to the admittedly broad definition of "rhetoric" offered above. Although scholars have made attempts at finding Tibetan translations for the term "rhetoric," these translations are either too narrow or not widely used, and basically boil down to two major proposals: *snyan ngag* ("poetics") and *tshig rgyan* ("verbal ornamentation"). Giuseppi Tucci, for example, suggests that Sakya Paṇḍita's (*Sa skya Paṇḍita* 1182-1251) important work *Introduction to Scholarship (mkhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo)*—a commentary on a major Indian work of poetics called the *Kāvyādarśa* by the seventh century scholar Daṇḍin—is essentially a work of rhetoric. Tucci thus effectively identifies poetics (skt. *kāvya*, tib. *snyan ngag*) with rhetoric, describing Sa-skya Paṇḍita's text as "a small treatise on rhetoric and exegesis...on the lines of similar Indian handbooks."[30] Whatever problems arise from conflating the categories of "poetics" and "rhetoric," Tucci has struck upon something important in his identification, since it is true that all three of the major sections of the *Introduction to Scholarship* (i.e., *rtsom pa, bshad pa,* and *rtsod pa*) do in fact correspond to important dimensions of the general understanding of rhetoric. I will return to this issue shortly.

The second suggestion for the term rhetoric is found in modern Tibetan language sources such as the recent *English-Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary* published in Beijing by the modern Tibetan Tashi Tsering, which renders rhetoric with the term *tshig rgyan* ("verbal ornamentation").[31] This is a fair translation insofar as rhetoric is understood in large part as being concerned with verbal elegance and embellishment. Traditionally, *tshig rgyan* is considered a sub-category of the larger rubric of *snyan ngag*. The word *tshig rgyan,* best understood as "figure of speech," is a translation of the important concept in Indian Aesthetics, *alaṃkāra*—the act of decorating in the arts, music, and poetry, and which later came to stand for the entire critical enterprise in India. In poetry, *alaṃkāra* refers to embellishment in terms of sense or sound. Moreover, the so-called treatises on ornamentation (*alaṃkāra-śāstra, tshig gi rgyan gyi bstan bcos*), or, as we might say, the "critical theory" genre of Indian literature, are comprised of manuals or handbooks on rhetoric very much along the lines of what we find in ancient Greece.[32] As in Western rhetorical theory, these texts consist of rules for figurative speech, simile (*rūpaka*), metaphor (*utprekṣā*), and so forth. Robert Thurman says of *alaṃkāra:*

> *Alaṃkāra* "prepares" a sacred offering by setting off its beauty and desirability and making it thus pleasing to a deity. Then, in works of art *alaṃkāra* makes the main content accessible and appealing to the audience. In Indian music, they are trills, entry and exit notes, syncopations, and so on. In poetry, they are figures of speech, ways of conveying sense and meaning through metaphor, hyperbole, synecdoche, and the like. Eventually the word itself came to stand for the entire critical, interpretive enterprise, as in the *Alaṃkāraśāstra*, the "Science of Ornament."[33]

The terms *snyan ngag* or *tshig rgyan* appear to serve as rough equivalents for the word "rhetoric," and they appear in various classical and modern sources and refer to elements which have clear parallels in the Western rhetorical tradition. Among the more famous classical Tibetan works concerned with the term *snyan ngag* is Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Introduction to Scholarship* mentioned above.[34] Among the modern materials one finds books such as Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las's *How to Engage in Poetry: Introduction to Understanding Verbal Ornamentation (snyan ngag la 'jug tshul tshig rgyan rig pa'i sgo 'byed).*[35] Moreover, a short survey of modern Tibetan materials on the subject of rhetoric found in the recently published *Catalogue of Chinese Publications in Tibetan Studies (1949-1991)* reveals that the category of "Creative Writing and Rhetoric" (*rtsom 'bri dang tshig rgyan*) consists exclusively of composition handbooks and studies on Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Introduction to Scholarship*. The absence of published material on topics other than the rudiments of composition or new studies of a single 13th century text suggests that even since the dawn of the modern period in Tibet the only literature concerned with rhetorical issues remain narrowly defined.[36]

TIBETAN CRITICAL PRACTICES

There are clearly important intersections between the Indian/Tibetan and Western traditions in the areas of argumentation, stylistics and composition. Leonard van der Kuip, however, has suggested that there is a conspicuous deficiency of critical writing on the subject of literature in Tibet. He states:

> In spite of the large volume of Tibetan poetry, when reading through Tibet's rich literary legacy, one cannot help but be struck by the virtually complete absence of literary criticism; that is to say there is really no evidence of a conscious reflection on the creative process in literature by means of a fully articulated and explicit set

> of criteria... It is only rarely that Tibetan authors of the pre-modern period, that is before the 1950s, give critical appraisals of the literary merit of the writings of their predecessors or contemporaries, and when they do, these are usually unsupported by explicit mention of the criteria with which they are working.[37]

Anyone reviewing pre-twentieth century Tibetan literature is struck by the abundance of literature of high aesthetic value, including a profusion of autobiographies, narratives, poetry, and so on.[38] Not surprisingly, there is also an extensive amount of literature that self-consciously addresses the issues of style, argumentation, and composition in Tibet (see below). Despite this, systematic works of theoretical reflection on these same issues that correspond to what we traditionally consider literary criticism are notably absent.

Thus, despite obvious similarities, any ready identification of a systematic theory or practice in Tibetan literary traditions with rhetoric or rhetorical criticism—as presented in the Western classical and modern traditions—is problematic. The difficulty in identifying a Tibetan literary genre that neatly corresponds to the Western model of rhetoric is further illustrated by the fact that in Tibetan literature there are few, if any, sexual, political, biographical, or historical *readings* of texts which are not themselves overtly concerned with sexuality, politics, biography, or history. That is, although there may be historical, sexological, and biographical texts, there are few historical, sexological, and biographical *readings* of texts that do not announce themselves as such. Nor are there theoretical discussions of how such readings would work, not surprising since the practice is itself lacking.

A possible exception to this may be found in the area of tantric literature in which sexualized or subversive readings of normative Mahāyāna philosophical discourse often appear. In particular, literature drawn from the class of Highest Yoga Tantra (*anuttara-yoga-tantra, bla na med pa'i rgyud*) situates the discourse of Buddhist enlightenment right within the human body, with all of its base impulses, urges and fluids.[39] This sort of "transgressive" or "deconstructive" reading of normative Buddhist notions in medieval India and beyond presents interesting possibilities, but was never theoretically or systematically developed as a coherent strategy for reading Buddhist texts. Candrakirti's hermeneutical strategy of employing the seven *alaṃkāras* in the reading of tantric texts, while interesting, is still greatly constrained by traditional

interpretive categories, and does not, in my opinion, constitute the sort of theoretical development being discussed here.[40]

It is clear that there are indeed important intersections between the Indian/Tibetan and Western traditions in the area of stylistics and composition, although it remains a question whether or to what extent literary practices corresponding to our own tradition's literary/rhetorical criticism existed in the former. Overly optimistic assessments of the breadth of the term *alaṃkāra*, however, appear to be premature. As Edwin Gerow notes:

> Alaṃkāra criticism passes over almost without comment the entire range of issues that center around the origin of the individual poem, its context, its appreciation, its authorship. It does not aim at judgment of individual literary works or at a theory of their origin.[41]

Writers of *alaṃkāra* school were neither naïve nor primitive in their understanding of their object of study, but they clearly did not concern themselves with these issues that have come to be considered important in our own traditions of literary criticism.[42] What continues to be absent from all these materials ranging from the earliest Indian sources to the most modern Tibetan literature, however, is any attempt to articulate a theoretical basis for the interpretation and assessment of a wide range of literature.

A PROVISIONAL TYPOLOGY OF TIBETAN RHETORIC

I now turn from the search for a term corresponding to "rhetoric" to actual Tibetan literary genres. I begin with a brief résumé of Tibetan literary genres that are concerned with the arts of verbal persuasion and stylistics as they are understood and used in the Western tradition. I will discuss these within the following six categories: (1) philosophical argumentation (*rtsod pa*), (2) polemics (*dgag lan*), (3) poetics (*snyan ngag*), (4) composition (*rstom pa)*, (5) synonymics or lexicography (*mngon brjod*), and (6) oratory (*bka' 'chid)*.[43]

Each of the three divisions of poetics has theoretical and performative dimensions: *rtsom pa* refers to the technique of composition as well as to literary products; *bshad pa* refers to both the theory and the act of exposition; and *rtsod pa* encompasses not only technical discussions of syllogism (*sbyor ba, prayoga*) and logical consequence (*thal 'gyur, prasaṅga*), but the application of those principles in actual debate. Polemical works are considered strictly in terms of rhetorical practice, since there are no manuals or theoretical treatises concerned with its art. Works of

lexicography are exclusively theoretical, and works of oratory can be either. Moreover, traditional Tibetan scholars generally consider the categories of polemics, exposition, and disputation to be "philosophical" in character, while those of poetics and synonymics are thought to be subdivisions of the "literary arts."[44] Finally, the category of oratory may be either religious or secular in its applications.

POETICS

The systematic study of poetics (*snyan ngag, kāvya*) in Tibet probably originated with Sa-Paṇ's *Introduction to Scholarship* mentioned above.[45] The three main chapters of this work are concerned with composition (*rtsom pa*), explanation (*bshad pa*), and disputation (*rtsod pa*). The category of *snyan ngag* provides what is probably the most plausible equivalent for the term rhetoric since each of its three principal subdivisions corresponds to important features of our working definition of rhetoric. Moreover, *nyan ngag*'s concern with the capacity of language to evoke certain emotions and impressions does indeed begin to take into account the relationships between writers, speakers, performances, texts, and their audiences. On the other hand, in actual practice we find that the discussions of *snyan ngag* often are no more than literary taxonomies that add little to our understanding of rhetoric as criticism.

COMPOSITION

In its chapter on composition, the *Introduction to Scholarship* delineates in great detail the relationships between the various moods (*rasa, ro*) and sentiments (*bhāva, nyams*) to be employed and manipulated by the author of a text to evoke certain responses in the audience, describing whether particular groupings of sentiments are concordant or contradictory with each other. This discussion is based on an analysis of the category of *tshig rgyan* and draws heavily on theoretical concepts found in the Indian tradition of literary and aesthetic criticism. Sakya Paṇḍita (*Sa skya Paṇḍita*) thus initiated an influential tradition of poetics in Tibet, which is said to have had a profound impact on the poetic writings of many prominent Tibetan religious figures including, among others, Budön (1290-1364), Longchenpa (1308-1363), and Tsongkapa (1357-1419).[46] Good composition is achieved through the skillful orchestration of various formal elements to achieve certain aesthetic effects. Some notable modern composition manuals include primers of creative writing that emphasize knowledge of traditional and modern methods, and manuals of practical writing that emphasize the composition of various types of business letters,

reports, and so forth.[47] This form of "rhetoric" more or less corresponds to the subject of writing as it is taught in schools and colleges in Europe and North America. The number of such primers being published both in Tibetan exile communities and in Tibet itself has been increasing over the last several decades.

EXPOSITION

This sub-category of *snyan ngag* itself has been termed "rhetoric" in a forthcoming article by Prof. Matthew Kapstein.[48] In the *Introduction to Scholarship,* Sa-paṇ provides a discussion of the principles and techniques of scriptural exposition focusing on the three factors of the teacher, the student, and the doctrine or text that is being taught.[49] Giving some examples of how to expound a passage, Sa-paṇ touches upon various issues including several grammatical topics, the virtues of correct teaching, and possible faults of the teacher, student, and teaching method. He includes strategies for explaining passages made difficult by archaic vocabulary, differences in dialect, mistaken translations, and so forth. Sa-paṇ concludes with a brief discussion of six hermeneutical principles known as the "six limits" or "six parameters" (*mtha' drug*). Through the application of these parameters one ascertains the character of a particular passage, i.e., whether it has a underlying intention or not (*dgongs pa dang dgongs pa ma yin pa*), whether it is interpretable or definitive (*drang ba'i don dang nges pa'i don*), or whether it is literal or figurative (*sgra ji bzhin pa ji bzhin ma yin pa*). Inasmuch as the category of exposition is concerned with both the production and delivery of persuasive oral religious discourse, it is clearly a form of rhetoric in the sense we have defined it above.[50]

PHILOSOPHICAL OR DIALECTICAL ARGUMENTATION

The term "disputation" (*rtsod pa*) covers a wide semantic range, and conveys a sense of joking, fighting, and entertainment. Sa-paṇ's chapter on this topic does not explain in detail the basic procedures of debate, but concentrates instead on philosophical and textual issues related to debate.[51] The actual practice of oral philosophical argumentation (*rtsod pa*) is traditionally taught with the aid of the so-called "debate manuals" (*yig cha*) associated with the curricula of large monastic institutions which served as textbooks for students. These textbooks are often self-consciously organized around the threefold themes of (1) refuting the (incorrect) philosophical systems of other schools (*gzhan lugs dgag pa*), (2) the presentation of one's own school's (correct) system (*rang lugs bzhag pa*), and finally (3) the dispelling of one's opponent's objections (*rtsod pa*

spong ba). The thematic structure and content of such textbooks suggest a keen interest in the process of persuasion.[52]

In monasteries of the Ge-luk order, for instance, students are to master the art of oral argumentation through thorough training in a preliminary course of dialectics (*bsdus grwa* or "collected topics" in the general sense of the term) including ontology (*bsdus grwa* in the narrow sense of the term), epistemology (*blo rig*), and logic (*rtags rigs*), before moving on to the main scholastic curriculum. The purpose of this initial stage is, as Onoda states, "not only to introduce students to basic theoretical schemata, but also to allow them to acquire the practical mastery of debating techniques which will be indispensable for more advanced dialectical study."[53]

Analysis of the category of "dialectical argumentation" raises interesting issues when considered from the point of view of rhetoric. First, dialectic in general is defined as argument by way of critical examination of logical consequences; rhetoric, on the other hand, is characterized by "probable" argumentation, that is, a form of discourse that strikes a balance between pure dialectical proofs and demonstrations and the seductive language of the sophists. This means that rhetoric and dialectics are opposed to and yet connected to each other. The tendency to see the Tibetan practice of debate as purely philosophical (and hence non-rhetorical) is mitigated by the common observation among Tibetans that the most skilled debaters can argue convincingly for erroneous philosophical positions even when adhering strictly to the rules of philosophical argumentation. Thus, even "dialectics" may be used to make "the weaker cause the stronger," a perversion usually associated with sophists and not philosophers. Second, Rebecca French reports that, "legal rituals in Tibet took place against the backdrop of formal monastic debate."[54] Although the point of monastic debate is to persuade others to adopt certain philosophical viewpoints, aspects of the Tibetan legal system such as questioning, analysis, outlining arguments, and so forth, also reflected this training in religious argumentation. Moreover, ordinary Tibetans often selected monks trained in the art of debate as their legal representatives.[55] Therefore, the art of disputation in Tibet may provide one of the clearest examples of oral rhetoric in practice, and corresponding not only to argumentation, but also to judicial rhetoric as well.

POLEMICS

The term "polemics" (*dgag lan*) here refers to the Tibetan literary practice of responding to or "answering" (*lan*) refutations (*dgag*) of one's philosophical positions. The history of Tibetan polemical literature extends to the twentieth century and includes works by figures from all the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bön. Literature of this type addresses itself to pressing philosophical controversies such as, for instance, whether emptiness (*śūnyatā, stong pa nyid*) is the lack of some intrinsic quality (*rang stong*) or the lack of some extrinsic quality (*gzhan stong*), whether there is doctrinal consistency among works by the same author, whether certain texts should be classified as belonging to one doctrinal system or another, and so forth.[56] Works of the genre are not theoretical treatises on rhetoric as such, but they provide excellent examples of various rhetorical strategies for making a case for the author's particular school or viewpoint. Among these we find such contrivances as identifying the opponent with a famous "heretic," or his position with that of a particular heterodox system; appealing to tradition or precedent by providing a citation from a universally acclaimed authoritative figure such as Śākyamuni Buddha or a revered Indian scholar or saint; or, the effective polemical device of providing a citation from the founder of the opponent's own school that appears to contradict or undermine his refutation. In contrast to the above-mentioned debate manuals that teach one to practice argumentation, these are arguments in practice—they contain neither theoretical reflection nor pragmatic instruction on the topic of polemics.

LEXICOGRAPHY

Tibetan texts on synonymics or lexicography (*abhidhāna, mngon brjod*, "clear expression") present detailed lists of poetic names and synonyms to be used in the production of literary works, and have traditionally been available to authors, translators and students[57] Perhaps the earliest example of this sort of text in Tibet was *The Treasure of Words (tshig gi gter)*, Sa-skya Paṇḍita's adaptation and partial translation of the *Amarakośa* of Amarasiṃha[58] Modern versions of lexicography are usually arranged in "alphabetical" order for ease of use for writers seeking particularly apt or poetic synonyms, or for readers who need to look up an obscure figure of speech. Books of this sort appear to correspond to a major strand of the early Greek rhetorical handbooks, namely those concerned with lexicographical materials, which were little more than catalogues of types of diction on the basis of meaning or form, including lists of examples.

ORATORY

Finally, there is the category of "oratory" or speechmaking (*bka' 'chid*). Occasions for such oratory include speeches composed designed to be recited during religious ceremonies such as those dedicated to the longevity of the teacher, enthronements, consecrations, and so forth, or during celebrations such as those that follow a great religious teaching.[59] These speeches often included brief historical accounts appropriate to the occasion, audience, and so forth. A speech commemorating the restoration of an ancient temple, for instance, would probably include a history of how the temple was founded and an account of the lineage of the masters who had resided there. A speech during an enthronement ceremony, on the other hand, would contain some remarks on the exploits of the previous holders of the same throne. Speeches of this type may be classified in general as "assembly speeches" (*tshogs gtam*). These are further divided into "speeches from above" (*yas gtam*)—i.e., speeches given by the presiding master to the assembly—and "speeches from below" (*mas gtam*)—i.e., public remarks made by a lesser member of the assembly. It is the status of the speaker, and not the actual contents of the speech, which determine whether it is classified as a "speech from above" or a "speech from below." David Jackson has done a detailed study on a significant genre of this sort of ceremonial oratory, called "mollas" (*mol ba*).[60] One very useful account of Tibetan speechmaking comes down to us from *The Treasury of Explanation: A Wish-Fulfilling Jewel (bshad mdzod yid bzhin nor bu)*, an encyclopedic work of the 15th or early 16th century by the otherwise unknown writer Don-dam-smra-ba'i-seng-ge.[61] Speechmaking is one of the last subjects discussed in this voluminous work. Unlike Sa-skya Paṇḍita's *Introduction to Scholarship*, which was designed primarily with monks in mind, the *Treasury of Explanation* seems to have been composed for pious laymen. In this brief (7-8 folios) section of the work, Dondam Maway Senge (*Don dam smra ba'i seng ge*, ca. fifteenth century) elaborates eight topics, among which are included the nature and etymology of speechmaking (*bka' chid ngo bo nge tshig*). Oratory of this nature, whether religious or secular, closely parallels the epideiectic or "ceremonial" form of Greek rhetoric most often employed in funeral orations and other formal events.

CONCLUSION OF ANALYSIS OF TIBETAN RHETORIC

This foregoing typology is neither definitive nor exhaustive; it represents a preliminary attempt to catalogue and classify genres of Tibetan literature that might be considered "rhetorical."

Many fundamental problems remain with this provisional taxonomy such as basic disagreements over appropriate English translations of key terms, not to mention the meaning of the English terms themselves. Moreover, for the sake of economy I have reluctantly omitted important forms of indigenous "rhetoric." Had I time, rather than relying more heavily on the Indian-based materials I would have examined such rhetorical practices as found in as the speeches from the gLing ge sar cycle and the legal argumentation alluded to in biographical accounts of figures such as Ta'i Situ Jangchub Gyaltsen. In the future I hope to include more discussion of a wider range of literature.

Tibetan literary traditions share with their Western counterparts many significant rhetorical features, including theories of composition, style, and argumentation. For obscure reasons, however, the critical dimension of rhetoric so familiar to us in the West seems never to have evolved in Tibet. For all the much acclaimed logical skill and philosophical sophistication of Tibetan Buddhist literature, it has to be admitted that they never developed a significant tradition of rhetoric or literary criticism that discloses textual possibilities along the lines our own do. Allowing for cultural differences, this may point to a philosophical blind spot that is perhaps not simply peripheral or an oddity to people doing philosophical investigations into Tibetan Buddhist literature, but rather should be examined more seriously as the lacuna from which some fundamental insights might emerge. For the time being, however, I can only offer the present limited observations as a prolegomenon to some future critical inquiry into the nature and significance of this divergence.

It is necessary to look elsewhere for methodological materials if one wishes to explore the literary dimension of texts heretofore evaluated strictly on a surface level, that is to say in terms of their propositional content, and instead look to broader biographical contexts. Hence, the methodology I will employ in this study will follow traditional Tibetan strategies for drawing out meaning and assessing effects, but then will use Western theory to interweave that with other dimensions of meaning.

Therefore, for the purposes of the present study, it is useful to turn back to the rhetorical tradition emanating originally from ancient Greece, in both its classical and modern incarnations. Obviously, there are inherent difficulties in attempting to apply evaluative criteria across historical periods and cultures, using historically contingent and culturally constructed categories to analyze alien materials trans-culturally. Callous disregard for the normative

historical and cultural explanatory categories that characterize the milieu in which a text is produced gives rise to the very real possibility of doing violence to the text(s) and the tradition(s) it represents. At minimum, inauthentic questions formulated without sensitivity to the interpretive horizons within which the text is situated will skew the direction of the answers the text provides.[62]

Here we enter into the domain of hermeneutics, a problematic that will permeate this entire study. In the dialogical model of understanding and interpretation, a reader puts "questions" to the text, which are then answered, often with new questions. Such questions may or may not be productive of meaning, but they always serve as the point of departure for one's dialogical understanding of the text's subject matter. Having a question or series of questions implies that the interpreter has a point of view, a set of presuppositions or prejudices, situated within a "horizon." As Hans-Georg Gadamer puts it:

> A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. He projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the text with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning.[63]

The recognition here is that all understanding necessarily involves some sort of prejudice—we are all inevitably constrained by our historical and cultural circumstances, and the questions we ask must be contingent upon these circumstances, and it is entirely appropriate that this is so. However, the process of putting authentic questions to the text and receiving answers from it inevitably leads to a revision of the reader's initial prejudices, which leads, in time, to a "fusion" of the reader's and the text's interpretive horizons.

In the course of our dialogue with a particular text, we may modify our understandings as the text's horizon fuses with our own. This fusion may include a greater appreciation of what is left "unsaid" in the text, i.e., its underlying assumptions and presuppositions. While it would be a mistake to conceptually reduce a text to a mere product of its historical circumstances, or to the details of its author's biography, it would be similarly mistaken to ignore these factors contributing to the text's generation altogether. Part of this fusion of horizons may well include a coming-to-terms of sorts with the intersection of the various discursive fields that constitute the text, with the result that one appropriates to a certain extent the predominant normative

evaluative criteria of the tradition from which the text emerges. Such an appropriation of a set of practices and beliefs peculiar to the text's intellectual milieu may well prove useful and interesting in terms of its ability to disclose layers of the text's meanings.

On the other hand, a network of beliefs that enables understanding in this sense may well constrain it in another sense; a framework that can support further research in one direction will necessarily exclude a range of other possibilities. Hence, like it or not, we return to our own prejudices, our own traditions, our own horizons. We are left, and we certainly begin, with the interpretive categories received from the tradition within which we are situated, although these categories are not fixed and may be revised as a result of the dialogue.

For the purposes of the present study, I believe it is legitimate and appropriate to employ methodological and critical strategies that are not necessarily found in the tradition being examined. The fact that Indian and Tibetan literary and critical traditions did not and do not for the most part address the sorts of issues I am focusing on here does not represent a deficiency in any normative sense. The relative absence of such material is only a "deficiency" in the sense that it does not lend itself well to my specific set of scholarly interests. This does not, however, constitute some sort of judgment about a particular intellectual culture's sophistication or evolution. On the contrary, it is far more reasonable to assume that the authors, scholars, and intellectuals of a particular culture or historical period are always going to possess deeper resources for understanding their own products, and that they will be in an significantly better position to understand and assess their own tradition. Hence, the decision not to make use of the prevalent hermeneutics of a given culture in the investigation of literary products of that same culture should not be construed as a criticism, but an acknowledgement of differing concerns and interests on the part of myself and traditional scholars.[64] In addition, while not necessarily as deep, our own resources for understanding are different in fundamental ways, and it is precisely this difference that may yield valuable insights into a time and space other than one's own.

'RHETORIC' IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Having now looked briefly at the wide range of meanings encompassed by the term rhetoric, and having attempted to address the issue of applying such conceptual categories cross-culturally, I will discuss briefly how I am using the term in the present study. Although, as we

have seen, the term has many resonances, I will concentrate on the two-fold aspect of rhetoric as being concerned with persuasion and style. Persuasion is the process by which interested parties use forensic, deliberative, and demonstrative strategies into order to offer their own distinctive visions of the past, how to interpret those visions in the present, and finally, what course of action to take in the future. These rhetorical strategies persuade through the process of organizing this bewildering world into coherent cosmologies and agendas. Adopting this provisional definition allows me to use rhetoric as an interpretive tool to analyze what I consider to be interesting dimensions of this unusual text, while giving me the freedom to bracket for the time being the various philosophical truth-claims. Rhetoric is a particularly useful rubric for my specific interests here inasmuch as it is explicitly concerned with the circumstances that lead to the production of distinct forms of discourse. Examples of these circumstances might include the intended audience(s) to whom the work is addressed, the details of the author's biography and/or personal concerns or agendas, the prevailing values and concerns of the society and so forth. Discourse can never occur without a context, and hence we must discard the convenient fiction of "context-free" words or sentences, regardless whether or not they are "philosophical" in character. Even the study of 14th century Tibetan texts—themselves deeply contextual works—by 20th century Western academicians is a transposition of such works into new contexts. Hence, we should try to become aware of how such study might change their significance by concealing the text's constraints or obscuring its institutional commitments. Furthermore, a discourse is not a static, totalized entity, but a dynamic field of interests, engagements, tensions, conflicts, and contradictions which reflects the organization of society and its institutions, as well as the power structures inherent therein.

LANGUAGE OF PERSUASION

As I have alluded above, I am inclined, like Aristotle, to understand and use the term "rhetoric" to refer primarily to the art and inquiry into the means of persuasion. I fundamentally view a particular society as a concatenation of various competing groups and individuals, each with their own interests and agendas. Seen in this way, different groups' discourses must be understood to articulate in some fashion each individual group's vision and agenda over against the visions and agendas of other competing groups. Hence, regardless of whether a discourse is apparently political, poetic, or philosophical (and thus ostensibly

"ahistorical") in nature, it is best understood in the context of the larger discursive field(s) of which it is a part. That is, an individual rhetoric is constitutive of, and constituted by, larger historical and discursive fields.

Seen in this way, we can begin to understand how a celebrated religio-philosophical text such as *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, which is normally viewed strictly in terms of its religious and philosophical claims, may in fact be part of a larger pattern of historical events. This is not to diminish the contribution of this and other texts to particular societies' religious insights. It is rather to suggest that their language may be functioning on a variety of different semantic levels simultaneously. Even if we choose not to dispute the apparently philosophical character of the text, one must still admit that it did not arise in a cultural or historical vacuum. The language, tropes, and diction of an individual religious text, whether Tibetan or Indian, Buddhist or Christian, are necessarily formed in dependence on received traditions, and in conversation with traditions articulating different viewpoints and interpretations of those traditions. Thus, the language of a certain author in a certain text will always be arguing for its own interpretation of tradition, whether implicitly or explicitly.

Therefore, in the remainder of the thesis I will explore the complex world of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. I shall do so guided by the supposition that it is an elegant work of rhetoric designed as much to carve out a sphere of influence for its author, his school of thought, and his institutional traditions as it was a work of abstruse philosophy. In the succeeding chapters I will demonstrate the complex of issues and conditions out of which *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* arose, including careful attention to personal and partisan conflicts attested to in the historical literature. Finally, I hope to demonstrate convincingly how *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* can be seen as a passionate and compelling argument for a partisan, interested, and particular worldview that was in direct conflict with competing and equally influential discourses in fourteenth century Tibet.

RHETORIC AS STYLE/STYLISTICS

In addition to rhetoric's undoubted function as the art of means of persuasion, as we have seen above it also has a very strong stylistic component. Whether an argument or presentation is persuasive or convincing in a particular context depends on a variety of factors. A polished speaker who uses wit and insight to draw his audience into his or her argument will usually be

more successful in persuading an audience to adopt certain attitudes or behavior than a speaker who simply rehearses lists of facts, however compelling those facts may be. Similarly, the writer who more skillfully exploits the strategies of his or her craft in the construction effective arguments will probably prevail in a written battle of wits. In addition, the distinctive qualities of various styles—the particular type of images and metaphors they deploy, for instance, or the relative balance of differing types of stylistic strategies they employ—themselves are ultimately related to the type of phenomena one aims to be persuasive about. Hence, I wish to look at the intersection between features of style, and the content of persuasion. When arguing for this type of world or this vision of the past, does the style one employs have any intrinsic relationship to it?

So it is with the great authors of Tibet as well. In fact, the period during which Longchenpa was active (i.e., the fourteenth century) was remarkable for its relative abundance of influential and important philosophers. Each of these major figures employed distinctive strategies in his writings, and was successful for different reasons. Some were especially skilled at convincing through their use of logic, others were able to cite immense numbers of authoritative texts in their presentations, while still others were able to capture their audiences' imaginations through the creative evocation of worlds resplendent with brilliant lights, sonorous sounds, fragrant odors, and so forth.

Thus, individual authors fashioned each text into what he or she hoped would be a compelling argument, drawing upon whatever resources were available to him or her, as well as through responding to his or her particular circumstances. In Tibetan literature such resources include such stylistic conventions as *anaphora, asterismos, antiptosis, aporia, ellipsis, epistrophe, isocolon,* and so forth familiar to us in the West. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is no exception to this pattern, and in the following short sections, I will begin to indicate what I take to be the primary influences on Longchenpa's choice of language in this interesting and important text.

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF THIS SPECIFIC TEXT

The Treasury of Abiding Reality represents the intersections of several religious, philosophical, historical, biographical, political, and even legal discourses. It may well also represent the culmination of Longchenpa's mature thought, as it was likely his last major work. *The Treasury*

of Abiding Reality is informed by a lifetime of experience, conflict, and reflection, and I will argue that in it, these various currents crystallize for a moment before moving on.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

A significant portion of the language Longchenpa uses in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is clearly linked to various historical and biographical circumstances of his late life. What follows is a brief indication of the major themes that will be developed throughout the remainder of the thesis.

BIOGRAPHIES

Basic knowledge of Longchenpa's personal biography, in addition to those of some of his allies and adversaries, will enhance our understanding of some of the hidden themes and subtexts to the text under consideration. The facts that Longchenpa was from central Tibet, and that his family background was somewhat aristocratic, for example, may contribute to interesting interpretations of his literary corpus. Not only these sorts of details, but others such as the content and sequence of his years of study, his lifestyle, and, in particular, his history of conflict with certain prominent individuals and groups. As has been mentioned several times above, Longchenpa's problematic relationship with the most powerful figure of the day, Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen, is reflected in his later writings, and I will argue that the very structure of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is informed by certain difficulties between the two. For this reason, not only will I spend a considerable amount of time investigating Longchenpa's biographical sources, but I will devote some energy to examining details of Jangchup Gyaltsen's biography, among others, as well, showing how these features of individual biographies are reflected in the actual language of the text.

LEGAL CODES

Perhaps the most striking thing about the language employed in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is its heavy emphasis on quasi-legalistic metaphors and tropes. This again relates to the conflict between Longchenpa and Jangchup Gyaltsen mentioned above. One of Jangchup Gyaltsen's most significant contributions to Tibetan discourse and history was his active re-introduction of the Dynastic Period legal codes into Tibetan political life. This revalorization of the value of "law and order" in Tibetan politics was mirrored in the religious sphere by a disproportionate amount of time being devoted to the exposition of the doctrine of the "law" of karma, cause and

effect, and so forth. In *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, on the other hand, Longchenpa spends a considerable amount of time undermining such normative interpretations of both secular and religious law. This at the very least was related to, and understood implicitly in terms of his ongoing conflicts with members of emerging religious institutions, as well as his well-documented hostility towards Jangchub Gyaltsen.

GENERAL HISTORY

Not only did the increasing emphasis on legalisms and legal codes in Tibetan religious and political discourse influence the language of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, broader historical trends did as well. The fourteenth century was a period of immense political instability in Tibet. The fall of the Sakya hegemony and its Mongol backers in 1354, along with the ensuing struggle between various sectarian groups to secure positions of political advantage, contributed greatly to an overall atmosphere of social and cultural ferment. During these times, alliances and animosities were constantly shifting, thus creating intense and strangely productive tensions. Longchenpa himself wryly comments on what he characterizes as a state of spiritual decline in several of his works, offering what may be construed as a subtle form of social critique. He himself was aligned with certain groups who had fallen out of favor with Jangchup Gyaltsen and his emerging polity. Again, it is difficult not to interpret ironic caustic passages in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* as pertaining to these larger historical and political trends.

LITERARY INTERPRETATIONS

But the text at hand is not merely a reaction to harsh political and social realities—it is first and foremost a dazzling work of religious literature with highly evolved stylistic and aesthetic sensibilities. For centuries intellectual discourse and religious discourse have been largely indistinguishable in Tibetan culture. Thus, intellectuals and artists, among others, have found religion to be the best venue for the expression of their art. Longchenpa in particular was obviously a man of highly developed aesthetic awareness, and this deep literary quality is evident throughout his corpus. Hence, on the surface level it is very important to keep in mind this text's fundamental characteristic as a work of religious literature, and to evaluate it with those criteria in mind.

THEORY/LIT. CRIT MATERIALS

In the portion of the thesis that deals with the literary quality of the text, I will employ a variety of critical methods. I shall begin by taking a thorough account of the precise metaphors, analogies, tropes, and forth utilized in the text. I shall analyze these figures of speech in terms of their content and the frequency of their usage without attempting to account for their unseen context. I will apply, as appropriate, various Western critical criteria as well, taking care to note, for example, whether the language in a certain passage is apophatic, whether a particular figure of speech is a metaphoric or metonymic, and so forth. After making an exhaustive catalogue of these dictions, I will then attempt to place them within their appropriate contexts, demonstrating how Longchenpa's decision to employ certain tropes in certain circumstances may indicate the larger issues discussed at length above.

RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

Just as I will use theory and critical methods to explicate the text's *literary* quality, I will do so in order to explore the text's religious character as well. For, however many interesting non-traditional ways to interpret this text as there may be, it is important not to overlook the traditional manner of representing it. In fact, I suggest that one's understanding of the depth rhetoric of texts of this kind is greatly enhanced by a broad general understanding of the surface rhetoric—i.e., the matters with which the text purports to concern itself.

DOCTRINAL INTERPRETATION

The most obvious level of religious interpretation of the rhetoric in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is that of doctrinal exposition. Longchenpa explicitly announces at the outset that this text is a work of Great Perfection philosophy, perhaps the single most important religious trend in the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. Near the end of the text, Longchenpa again informs us that not only is it a work of Great Perfection doctrine, it is specifically a work devoted to the explication of the "Space Series" (*klong sde*), one of the three principal categories of the Great Perfection system. Although there is strong evidence in the form of the numerous citations made by Longchenpa in the body of the text that it is actually a work related to the "Mind Series" (*sems sde*) and the "Seminal Heart" (*snying thig)* traditions of Great Perfection, there is no question that the work overall is a presentation of the Great Perfection view, and I will explore some of the salient details of this doctrinal orientation in an upcoming chapter.

PRAXIS INTERPRETATIONS

Not only is *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* a text that concerns itself with abstruse doctrinal issues, it also addresses the issue of these doctrines' practical applications. This particular section presents interesting problems in the sense that the rhetoric of the text is very strongly *anti*-practice, arguing strongly for the total lack of any need for self-cultivation or self-discipline. This rhetoric is part of what makes *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* so compelling. Nonetheless, one finds passages nested within the body of the text that refer to specific meditation practices, and it is by no means univocal in the matter of religious praxis.

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

This portion of the analysis will focus on the appropriation and use of common Indian and Tibetan literary tropes to make religious points. Longchenpa, like other major Tibetan religious figures of his day, drew on a wealth of symbolic language inherited from both indigenous and exogenous sources. Thus, for instance, Longchenpa spends a significant amount of time developing the use of the metaphor of the great mythical bird the *khyung* throughout the text. His use of this metaphor is of particular interest because not only is the *khyung* the Tibetan translation for the Indian *garuḍa* with all the Hindu and Buddhist mythological resonances that entails, but it is also the term for a specifically Tibetan mythical creature. His choice of this polyvalent image allows him to evoke a multitude of symbolic meanings, even when simply making the point that one who is an adherent of the Great Perfection system "soars" like a great *khyung* over the narrow-minded views of the lower schools.

SUBVERSION OF RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS

Finally, I will discuss in detail the way in which the language of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* expounds a set of doctrines, through the inversion and subversion of more normative Buddhist doctrinal discourse.

HERMENEUTICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR BIOGRAPHICAL READING OF TEXTS

Much of my argument in what follows will be based upon the assumption that *The Treasure of Abiding Reality* is informed not only by the specific historical circumstances in which it was

produced, but also by specific biographical details of Longchenpa's life. The basic premise is that it is interesting and useful to interpret literary and philosophical texts in terms of the psychology and biography of their authors. While such as assumption may yield interesting insights, it is not unproblematic especially in light of the various critical discussions on the identity of the author and the usefulness of biographical and/or psychoanalytical criticism in recent years. Although the topic of the present study is not particularly focused on such ancillary theoretical issues, it is important for us to explore briefly some of the more difficult aspects of this assertion.

For a very long time, the figure of the text's "author," as well as his or her "authorial intention," has been viewed in the West as relatively unproblematic. Clearly, on a simple level, an author is the person who writes a work. Indeed, Wilhelm Dilthey and Friedrich Schliermacher, important figures in the Romantic Hermeneutics movement, hold that we can and must come to an understanding of the author's intention in order to properly understand what the text means. Such a process has various facets, such as the acquisition of a thorough linguistic competence and an informed historical consciousness. Schliermacher asserts that our formidable task as interpreters is "To understand the text at first as well and then even better than its author."[65] In order truly to reach this complete understanding, we must finally project ourselves back in history psychologically to achieve a quasi-mystical union with the author in what Schliermacher terms the "divinatory method." He states: "By leading the interpreter to transform himself, so to speak, into the author, the divinatory method seeks to gain an immediate comprehension of the author as an individual."[66]

In the early twentieth century, no less a figure than Sigmund Freud developed "psychoanalytic" criticism with twenty-one separate articles or essays devoted to analyzing aesthetics or literature with psychoanalysis as a tool. The best-known example of this is found in *The Interpretation of Dreams* in which Freud considers the appeal of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* to be explained by the universality of the Oedipus complex. He extends this to an analysis of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, using this rubric to show how Hamlet, who demonstrates the capacity for violence in other acts of revenge, hesitates to kill Claudius since the latter killed Hamlet's father and married his mother, thus acting out Hamlet's own strong Oedipal fantasies. Freud then directs his analysis to the author of the work, Shakespeare. Relying on available biographical information, Freud argues that Shakespeare's experience of the death of his father revived in

him his childhood feelings towards his father, making his unresolved Oedipal feelings come to the surface with great force.[67]

Freud basically understood the work of criticism as psychoanalyzing the author, or attempting to treat the characters in a novel or play as neurotics. His basic approach was to examine and try to answer specific questions such as, "What made this person become a writer, and why did he or she produce this text or group of texts?", "What is the audience responding to in this text or performance?", "What unconscious drives or desires does the work imitate or fulfill?" Freud encourages the study of the author's biography to help discover the information that an analyst might gather from sessions with a patient. It is his position that "a strong experience in the present awakens in the creative writer a memory of an earlier experience (usually belonging to childhood) from which there now proceeds a wish which finds its fulfillment in the creative work."[68]

This classical Freudian criticism developed into a psychoanalysis of the author using both standard biographical methods and data such as diaries, letters, manuscripts, eyewitness accounts, and so forth, and repeated images, situations and character types of the author's literary products. As interesting and useful as the general assumptions and goals of this type of criticism may have been initially, they soon devolved into a sort of vulgar Freudianism, which searches out phallic symbols (everything tubular, pointed, vertical), womb symbols (everything curved, round, enclosed, dark) and so on. In the most extreme cases, such criticism has been accused of being generally lacking in sensitivity to literature, one-sided, reductive, and filled with psychoanalytic jargon. It seems that in order to use Freudian theory fruitfully in the interpretation of texts, one must use his ideas (and not necessarily his jargon) selectively, and in limited ways. Just as Freud noted that the analyst had to pay careful attention to everything the patient said, successful textual interpreters should be interested in all aspects of the literary work and not just those repeated images and plot events that support simple equations with neuroses and symptoms.

For all of the idiosyncrasies of Freudian criticism, it shares with Romantics such as Dilthey and Schliermacher a certain psychological orientation and belief in the relative stability and accessibility of the "author." Such assumptions have come under very strong attack during the last two decades however. Among the leading critics of these beliefs have been Roland Barthes

and Michel Foucault, whose influential essays have rendered the author into the site for a discussion of a number of interpretive problems.

Barthes, in his important essay "The Death of the Author," offers a sharp critique of naive notions of authorship, stating that the Author enters his own death as soon as writing begins.[69] He suggests that the Author is a social construct arising out of the same historical circumstances that gave rise to the prestige of the individual. This notion is used as an interpretive strategy to impose coherence and uniformity on a literary work or body of works. Barthes criticizes the tendency to view a work as the product or extension of a specific person, as if the author were somehow the parent of her work. Rather, he recommends that we think of the author as a "subject" whose function is to make language "hold together," rather than a "person." For Barthes, the author never creates anything new or original, but always creates texts that are nothing more than "a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture."[70] The Author with all of her passions, feelings, humor, impressions is transformed into the "scriptor" whose only power is to mix writings in such a way as to counter others, never resting on any of them. The removal of the Author renders any claims to explain or "decipher" the text futile. Barthes argues that critics are very fond of the practice of attributing a text to a specific author because it allows them to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final meaning. He states: "Such a conception suits criticism very well, the latter allotting itself the important task of discovering the Author (or its hypostases: society, history, psyché, liberty) beneath the work: when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained'—victory to the critic."[71] The history of the Author, Barthes comments unsurprisingly, is also the history of the Critic, and the death of the author also necessitates the death of the critic along with her claims to understand or pierce the ultimate meaning of the text. As the author and his God-like intention and control recede into the background, the text itself, the writing, and perhaps most important, the *reader* emerge to take their rightful places. As Barthes puts it, "Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author."[72]

Michel Foucault's critique of the author-function in his "What Is an Author?", while not as polemical as Barthes' essay, is no less trenchant. Like Barthes, Foucault sees the rise of the notion of the "author" as relating to the emergence of the privileged status of the individual in

the history of ideas, literature, philosophy, science, and so forth. Rather than serving the function of bestowing immortality on the originator of a text, or at least keeping death at bay, Foucault argues that writing has now become the agent for the "death" of the author, and the effacement of his or her individual characteristics. He states that it is not enough simply to replace one's analysis of the author with an analysis of the "work" itself, since the word "work" and the alleged unity it represents are as problematic as the author's individuality.

The author's identity and individuality commonly held to inform specific texts interest Foucault less than what he terms the "author-function" and its relationship to certain modes of discourse. He points out, for instance, that the attribution of a text to a certain author serves more than a mere indicative function; it serves as a commentary and description as well. By assigning an author's name to a text or texts, one effectively categorizes them, grouping them together with certain types of texts, and excluding them from others. He shows how the criteria employed by Christian exegetes to determine whether a text is written by a single author still basically describe the "functions" of an author as they are understood by modern literary critics. The author is defined as a constant level of value, as a field of theoretical or conceptual coherence, as stylistic unity, and as a historical entity situated at the crossroads of certain specific events. For literary critics, the author becomes a convenient way to explain the presence of certain features of a given text, as well as their transformations and distortions. These explanations are produced through an analysis of the author's biography, his individual perspective, his social position, and the revelation of his basic design.

Foucault calls into question the absolute and founding role of the subject in the production of texts, and advocates the setting aside of the biographical and psychological references to the author in favor of internal and architectonic analyses of texts. Nevertheless, he remains interested in analyzing the subject as "a complex and variable function of discourse."[73] Finally, Foucault suggests that, far from being the indefinite source of significations that fill a work, the author functions to limit, choose, and exclude among otherwise infinite meanings. In this sense, the author is said to be an ideological product since he is used to limit the potentially dangerous, subversive results of a proliferation of meaning.

All modern and post-modern critics do not necessarily assert the irrelevance of the author, however. In his short essay "Biography and Intention," the prominent reader-response critic Stanley Fish, for example, argues against the New-Critical doctrine that the meaning and value

of a work are independent of an author's biography. Fish states unambiguously that the question of meaning can never be completely divorced from questions of biography and authorial intention. He attempts to demonstrate how the two types of meaning posited by linguistic philosophers (i.e., sentence meaning or literal meaning, and the speaker's meaning or contextual meaning) do not exist in the manner such philosophers usually suggest. Most linguistic philosophers assume that the latter type of meaning exists in a parasitic relationship with the former, and hence they see such contextual meaning as philosophically uninteresting. Fish, on the other hand, thinks that "there is no such thing as a meaning that is specifiable *apart* from the contextual circumstances of its intentional production." He goes on to say, "To put the matter baldly, the act of construing meaning is ipso facto the act of assigning intention within a specific set of circumstances; you just cannot do one with the other."[74] Even seemingly unproblematic statements contain many ambiguities. The simple declarative sentence, "This is a fine job," for instance, is ambiguous between praise for a particular performance and an assessment for employment. This speech act of praising could be meant either straightforwardly or sarcastically. In order to interpret successfully even a seemingly forthright statement of this kind requires the auditor/reader to construe the intention of the speaker/author. The one thing you cannot do, according to Fish, is to presuppose no speaker or understand a statement as something other than an expression of an intentional being with a particular history. Fish summarizes:

> It follows, then, that neither can you read independently of biography, of some specification of what kind of person—and with that what abilities, concerns, goals, purposes, and so on—is the source of the words you are reading. And if that follows, it follows too that disputes about meaning are always disputes about biography, whether or not they are explicitly so labeled.[75]

Thus Fish, who is probably best known for his critique of the notion of a stable, unproblematic "authorial intention," argues that the act of construing meaning is necessarily an act of construing intention on the basis of an understanding of the author's biography.

Recent feminist criticism is also interested in retrieving the details of individual authors' biographies. Theorists such as Cheryl Walker acknowledge the contributions of Barthes and Foucault in pointing out the naivete and rigidity of earlier forms of biographical criticism, but

suggest that it is unwise to give up all vestiges of the author. When Foucault asks at the end of his influential essay, "What difference does it make who is speaking?" Walker responds that, "Women have long been aware...that it makes a good deal of difference who is perceived as speaking."[76] Walker and other Feminist critics see this trend towards effacing the concerns of an author's positionality and intention on the part of (largely male) theorists as paralleling the general inclinations of earlier forms of criticism. Walker states the following about the "death of the author" critics:

> Though sometimes recommended by critics who think of themselves as sympathetic to the claims of feminism, this mode mimics, it seems to me, the universalizing tendencies of patriarchal criticism by claiming to be able to transcend culture and gender entirely, at least at the level of authorship. This approach has always resulted in the masking of oppression of various kinds. As long as gender, class, race, sexual orientation, and other forms of difference are constituted hierarchically by power politics, they will remain important features of both reading and writing.[77]

Rather than erasing the author in favor of an abstract textuality, Walker advocates a critical practice of finding in the text an "author-persona" through assessing the psychological, historical, and literary intersections, while leaving aside the questions of the author's "intentions." This "persona criticism" is "a form of analysis that focuses on patterns of ideation, voice, and sensibility linked together by a connection to the author."[78] Such an approach allows one, Walker argues, to take factors like culture, psyche, and intertextuality into account when reading a text, as well as biographical data about the writer.

All these theoretical approaches to assessing the role and/or the importance of the author have their relative strengths and weaknesses. The Romantic notions espoused by Schliermacher and Dilthey may appear naïve to us now, but the desire to know and understand the underlying intentions that motivated an author to compose a particular text remains compelling to all critics, even those who deprecate the role of such intentions. Similarly, notwithstanding the simple-minded tendency of vulgar Freudians to find phallic symbols and Oedipal complexes lurking behind every metaphor, the impulse to understand a literary work in the context of its author's personal history is still a fruitful mode of literary inquiry. The insights of

Barthes and Foucault allow us to see that the term *author* does more than simply assign a given work an individual human origin—it serves to identify the work with a certain set of discourses or ideologies. As liberating as these postmodern attacks on origins and the belief that we can explain something by pointing to where we think it comes from are, however, they also tend to view the author and her text in a counterintuitive, almost mechanistic way. Fish's argument that it is impossible to construe textual meaning without first construing the authorial intention seems convincing, but one must bear in mind that Fish himself is not making a case for the existence of a stable referent in the form of the authorial intention. Rather, he seems to be suggesting that individual readers will (indeed, must) impute intentions to authors in dependence on their respective inclinations and historical circumstances. Thus Fish, a leading reader-response critic, finds himself in the paradoxical position of repudiating authorial intention even as he argues that meaning is impossible without it. And finally in our brief survey of biographical criticism, feminist critics like Walker attempt to strike a balance between those who would completely eschew authorship and those for whom the author is an ascertainable reference limiting what a text can and should mean. Walker's approach has the great advantage of successfully retrieving the critical interpretive tools of history, biography, and so forth, but is also necessarily aligned with a particular political agenda.

I find much to commend all of these theoretical orientations. Although I remain dubious about the possibility of knowing the author's intention better that the author herself, I am sympathetic to the project of understanding as much as possible about the history, biography, language, and so forth, of an author when trying to interpret her text. Similarly, although I am not impressed with rote and simplistic psychoanalytic interpretations of literary texts, I see merit in allowing ourselves to bring our interpretation of the author's psychology to bear on our own textual analysis.

Thus, in what follows, I will attempt to balance between the death and endurance of the author in analyzing Longchenpa and his literary masterpiece, as well as the use of western-influenced methodologies and Tibetan culture's own sensibilities for eliciting meaning from such texts.

---

[1] The following discussion relies heavily on John Bender and David E. Wellberry, "Rhetoricality: On the Modern Return of Rhetoric," in J. Bender and D.E. Wellberry, eds.,

The Ends of Rhetoric: History, Theory, Practice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 23-27.

2 See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions 2nd Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), and Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

3 It has become popular to mark shifts in philosophical method and preoccupation as "turns." In the modern period, for example, philosophy turned from a previous preoccupation with metaphysics to a concern with the possibility and the nature of knowledge which could be called an "epistemological turn." This philosophical orientation dominated for about two centuries, only to be replaced in the early twentieth century by the so-called "linguistic turn" which has been characterized by preoccupations with the structures of language, word meanings, and so forth. Recently, however, the views about the foundations of knowledge and the knowing subject that were the basis for the epistemological turn, and the ability of analysis with language and meaning to address to bear the weight of philosophical concerns have been called into question. This has led to a new direction in philosophy characterized by an interest in interpretive activities, known by some as the "interpretive" or "hermeneutical" turn. See Richard Rorty, ed., *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); David R. Hiley, James F. Bohman, and Richard Shusterman, eds., *The Interpretive Turn: Philosophy, Science, Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1. For a similar development in the discipline of rhetoric, see Herbert W. Simmons, *The Rhetorical Turn: Invention and Persuasion in the Conduct of Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

4 Richard Rorty, "Introduction: Metaphilosophical Difficulties of Linguistic Philosophy," in Richard Rorty, ed., *The Linguistic Turn*, 10.

5 See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

6 See, for instance, Jacques Derrida, *On Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 158.

7 See Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142-143; Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 108.

8 Jean-François Lyotard's work attempts to provide accounts of the paths discourse might take to move beyond the limitations of metaphysics, without falling into the complacency of a

meta-language. Lyotard seeks to challenge the meta-narratives and to reorganize knowledge as a series of "little" narratives that neither make any claim to finality nor seek to put an end to narration. See, for example, *The Postmodern Condition*, Bennington and Massumi, trans., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

9 See Harold Coward, ed., *Derrida and Indian Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York, 1990).

10 C.W. Huntington, Jr., *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Mādhyamika* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 44-45, 130, *et passim*.

11 See Robert R. Magliola, *Derrida on the Mend* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1984). See also Robert R. Magliola, *On Deconstructing Life-Worlds: Buddhism, Christianity, Culture* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1997).

12 Robert A.F. Thurman, trans., *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the* Essence of True Eloquence: *Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 90-111.

13 See Paul de Man, Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 7 and Resistance to Theory: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 66.

14 John Bender and David E. Wellberry, "Rhetoricality," 7.

15 Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), v.

16 See Steven D. Goodman and Ronald M. Davidson, "Introduction," in S. Goodman and R. Davidson, eds. *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 3.

17 Aristotle, *On Rhetoric* cited in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas Vol. 3* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1973), s.v. "Rhetoric After Plato," by Bernard Weinberg.

18 Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, "Structuring Rhetoric," in A.O. Rorty, ed., *Essays on Aristotle's* Rhetoric (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 12.

19 Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, "Structuring Rhetoric," 23.

20 Sophists were a class of teachers of rhetoric, philosophy, and the art of successful living in ancient Greece, becoming prominent around the 5th century BCE. They were the first to offer anything approaching systematic education beyond the elementary topics, and were undoubtedly among the most learned men of their time. The primary goal of the Sophists'

rhetorical training was to increase people's chances of getting an equal hearing for their ideas "such that they and their contributions might be recognized and respected as important to the sociopolitical workings of a community." See Walter Jost and Michael Hyde, *Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Our Time: A Reader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 3. Despite this praiseworthy aim, Plato and others viewed the Sophists with suspicion, feeling that the art of persuasion will quickly and naturally devolve to the art of deceit.

[21] Stanley Fish, "Rhetoric," in Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989), 479.

[22] Stanley Fish, "Rhetoric," 474.

[23] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 125.

[24] Stanley Fish, "Rhetoric," 488.

[25] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* Richard Howard, trans. (New York: Pantheon, 1965).

[26] Sherry B Ortner, *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 13-14.

[27] The present discussion relies on relevant earlier studies on Tibetan literature by David Jackson, Matthew Kapstein, Leonard van der Kuijp, Jose Cabezon, and others.

[28] Although this is true generally, Matthew Kaptein suggests in a forthcoming article that the Tibetan tradition of classical learning may be fruitfully compared to post-renaissance conceptions of "classical education" in the West, which unquestionably included the study of rhetoric. See Matthew Kapstein, "The Indian Literary Identity in Tibet," in Sheldon Pollack, ed., *Literary Cultures in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming), pp. 39, 52.

[29] Paul Ricoeur, "Rhetoric—Poetics—Hermeneutics," in Walter Jost and Michael J. Hyde, eds., *Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Our Time: A Reader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 61.

[30] See Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Roma: Libreria dello Stato, 1949), 101-102. The confusion of the categories of rhetoric and poetics is hardly without precedent, even in the West. These disciplines tend to overlap with each other, to the point where each claims for itself the whole of discourse. In the Western tradition, as we have seen briefly, rhetoric is defined first by its typical situations of discourse: the assembly, the tribunal, and commemorative

gatherings, corresponding respectively to deliberative, judicial, and epideictic rhetorics. Rhetoric is also characterized by "probable" argumentation, that is, a form of discourse that strikes a balance between pure dialectical proofs and demonstrations on the one hand, and the seductive language of the sophists on the other. Inasmuch as it is oriented toward the audience's response, rhetoric may also be defined as a technique of persuasive discourse, i.e., argumentation in all its forms. Finally, rhetoric is understood to include the elements of elocution and style that extend the art of persuasion into the art of pleasing even when in the service of argumentation, and thus does not sink into simple ornamentation. Poetics, on the other hand, means, according to Aristotle, the production of discourse. Taken in this sense, rhetoric may be considered a form of poetics since it is also an art of composing discourse. However, the initial point of radiation of poetics is the plot of a fable or myth, including epic, tragedy, and comedy; the poetic act is the invention of a fable plot, whereas the rhetorical act is the elaboration of an argument. Hence, although these two disciplines intersect in many interesting and important ways, the poet does not argue in the strict sense, and the rhetorician does not create a plot or fable, even if a narrative element is incorporated into the presentation of his argument. See Paul Ricouer, "Rhetoric—Poetics—Hermeneutics," 60-72, and Paul Ricouer, "Between Rhetoric and Poetics," in A.O. Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 324-384.

31 See Tashi Tsering, ed., *English-Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988), p. 867. This dictionary concentrates primarily on modern technical terms, many of which, since they have no corresponding Tibetan word, must be rendered with neologisms. The term *tshig rgyan* ("rhetoric"), however, is not a neologism and appears in both *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* and Sarat Chandra Das's *Tibetan-English Dictionary*. In the former, the term is defined as (1) verbal ornamentation as found in Tibetan grammatical works such as the *sum cu pa*, (2) both semantic and phonological poetic ornamentation, and (3) ornaments that serve as verbal intensifiers.

32 See George A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 32. Kennedy identifies three main strands of the early history of rhetoric: lexicographical, stylistic, and formal.

33 Robert A.F. Thurman, "Vajra Hermeneutics," in Donald Lopez Jr., ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 146n.

34 Sakya Paṇḍita (*sa skya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal mtshan*), *Introduction to Scholarship (mkhas pa 'jug pa'i sgo)* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981).

---

[35] Dung-dkar blo-bzang 'phrin-las, How to Engage in Poetry: Introduction to Understanding Verbal Ornamentation (tshig rgyan) (snyan ngag la 'jug tshul tshig rgyan rig pa'i sgo 'byed) (Qinghai: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982).

[36] Catalogue of Chinese Publications in Tibetan Studies (1949-1991) (*krung go'i bod rig pa'i dpe cha'i dkar chag*) (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994), 99-101.

[37] van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres," in José Cabezón and Roger Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature: Studies in* Genre (Ithaca: Snow Lion Press, 1996), 403.

[38] For a discussion of Tibetan autobiographical literature see, for example, Janet B. Gyatso, *Apparitions of Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 101-123, et passim.

[39] For interesting examples of this "sexualized" reading of normative Mahāyāna conceptual categories, see David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1987), 132, 167, 290. For further discussions of difficulties in the interpretation of tantric ethics, see J.W. de Jong, "A New History of Tantric Literature in India," in Acta Indologica 6, (Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1984): 91-113; Michael Broido, "Killing, Lying, Stealing, and Adultery: A Problem of Interpretation in the Tantras," in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., Buddhist Hermeneutics (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 71-118.

[40] The *locus classicus* for the "Seven Ornaments" (skt. *saptālalaṃkāra*, tib. *rgyan bdun*) is the *Jñānavajrasamuccaya*. In brief the seven are hermeneutical principles used to interpret tantric texts. They consist of: (1) "Preliminaries," i.e., establishing the text's original context; (2) the "Four Procedures" of continuum, ground, definition, and means (i.e., the practice dimension); (3) the "Six Hermeneutical Paramaters," i.e., definitive and interpretable meanings, ulterior and ingenuous statement, and literal and symbolic speech; (4) the "Four Categories," i.e., linguistic, common, mystic, and ultimate meanings; (5) the "Two Types of Teaching," i.e. public and private; (6) the "Five Types of Disciple"; and (7) the "Two Realities" in the context of the Perfection Stage meditation practice. For more elaborate discussions of the Seven Ornaments see Robert Thurman, "Vajra Hermeneutics," 128-143, and Ernst Steinkellner, "Remarks on Tantristic Hermeneuics," in L. Ligeti, ed., *Proceedings of the 1976 Csoma de Körös Symposium*, Biblioteca Orientalia Hungarica, no. 23, (Budapest, 1978).

[41] Edwin Gerow, "Poetics of Stanzaic Poetry," in Edward C. Dimock, et al., *The Literatures of India: An Introduction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 126.

[42] Gerow, "Poetics of Stanzaic Poetry," 127.

[43] This list of categories is neither definitive nor exhaustive; it represents a preliminary attempt to catalogue and classify genres of Tibetan literature that might be considered "rhetorical." Moreover, many fundamental problems remain with this provisional taxonomy such as basic disagreements about appropriate English translations of key terms. For example, the term *rtsom rig(s)* may be rendered either "composition" or literature." The difficulty in this example is how to decide whether the term serves as a larger over-arching category (i.e., "literature"), or as a smaller sub-category ("composition").

[44] There is a seeming contradiction between poetics being considered a literary art while its individual components of exposition and debate are considered under the rubric of philosophy. The probable explanation for this anomaly is that it is really only the chapter on composition within the *Introduction to Scholarship* that is directly concerned with the production of secular literature, the chapters on exposition and debate clearly falling under the heading of religion. Thus, while the *Introduction to Scholarship* is considered a work on poetics in general, in practice only one of its three principal chapters is directly concerned with the topic as such.

[45] John F. Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression: The Central Chapter of Daṇḍin's Kāvyādarśa" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1989), 1442.

[46] See Leonard van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra," in Cabezón and Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature*, 400. Bu ston composed a fine example of *kāvya (snyan ngag)* in the introduction to his *Religious History (chos 'byung)*; kLong chen pa wrote a short work illustrating the principles of Tibetan poetics entitled *Ornament of Flowers: A Treatise on Verse (tshigs su bcad pa'i bstan bcos me tog gi rgyan)*; and Tsong kha pa also composed a small work on the third chapter of the *kāvyādarśa*. See Budön Rinchendrup *(bu ston rin chen grub), Introductory verses to the bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa'i gsal byed chos kyi 'byung gnas gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod*, Lokesh Chandra, ed., Vol. 24 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), 634-636; Lonchenpa (*klong chen pa dri med 'od zer*), *Miscellaneous Writings* (*gsung thor bu*) 2 Vols. (Delhi: Reproduced by Sanje Dorje, 1974), Vol. 2, 609-621. (I-Tib-1110); Tsongkhapa (*tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*), *rje thams chad mkhyen pa chen po'i bka' 'bum thor bu* (Dharamsala: Cultural Printing Press, n.d.), 724.1-730.6. See also John F. Eppling, "A Calculus of Creative Expression," 1482-1483.

[47] See, for example, *Elementary Knowledge on Creative Writing (rtsom gzhung blo gsal 'jug sgo)* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe krun khang, 1990); *How to Write Practical Writings (rgyun spyod yig rigs gang 'dra byas nas 'bri dgos)* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe krun khang,

1973); *General Knowledge of Letter Writing* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe krun khang, 1987).

48 In speaking of Sa-paṇ's *Introduction to Scholarship*, Prof. Kapstein states: "It is here that he formulates his conception of a trivium based upon the mastery of composition, rhetoric and debate." See Mathhew Kapstein, "The Indian Literary Identity in Tibet," 42.

49 Sakya Paṇḍita, *Introduction to Scholarship*, 75-76. See also David P. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III)* Vol. 1 (Wein: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistiche Studien Universität Wein, 1987), 195.

50 Cf. Augustine's principles for interpretation set forth in his *On Christian Doctrine*. See D.W. Robertson, Jr., trans., *On Christian Doctrine* (Indianopolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958).

51 David Jackson, The Entrance Gate for the Wise, 196.

52 For a discussion of these debate manuals, see Guy Newland, "Debate Manuals (yig cha) in dGe lugs Monastic Colleges," in Cabezón and Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature*, 202-216.

53 Shunzo Onoda, "*bsDus grwa* Literature," in Cabezón and Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature*, 189. For a particularly detailed presentation of the logic (*rtags rigs*) section of the collected topics, see Katherine M. Rogers, "A Tibetan Manual of Logic: An Introduction to Reasoning in the Ge-luk-ba Monastic Educational System" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1992).

54 Rebecca R. French, *The Golden Yoke: The Legal Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 102.

55 Rebecca French, *The Golden Yoke*, 103.

56 See DonaldLopez, "Polemical Literature (*dgag lan*)," in Cabezón and Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, 218.

57 For examples of such Tibetan manuals of synonymics, see Tenzin Gyaltsen (bstan- 'dzin rgyal-mtshan, *The Golden Key of Clear Expression (mngon brjod gser gyi lde mig)* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1988), and bLo-bzang tshe-ring, ed., *A Synopsis of Clear Expressions (mngon brjod phyogs bsgrigs)* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1986).

58 Sakya Paṇḍita, *tshig gi gter*, in *The Complete Collected Works of the Great Masters of the Sa skya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, vol. 5: The Complete Works of Pa°ḍita Kun dga' Rgyal mtshan* (Tokyo: Toyo Bunkyo, 1968), p. 125.3.1-131.4.6.

59 David P. Jackson, *The Mollas of Mustang: Historical, Religious and Oratorical Traditions of the Nepalese-Tibetan Borderland* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1984), 58.

[60] See David Jackson, *The Mollas of Mustang*.

[61] Don-dam-smra-ba'i-seng-ge, *A 15th Century Tibetan Compendium of Knowledge (bshad mdzod yid bzhin nor bu)*, edited by Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi: Published by Dr. Mrs. Sharada Rani, 1969), pp. 506-522.

[62] Gadamer states: "Thus the meaning of a sentence is relative to the question to which it is an answer, but that implies that its meaning necessarily exceeds what is said in it." See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method (2nd Revised Edition)* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1990), 370.

[63] H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 267.

[64] The views expressed in this discussion are informed by a conversation with Prof. Charles Hallisey of Harvard University, February 6, 1999.

[65] Friedrich D. E. Schliermacher, "General Hermeneutics," in Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed., *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present* (New York: Continuum, 1989), 83.

[66] Friedrich D. E. Schliermacher, "Grammatical and Technical Interpretation," in Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed., *The Hermeneutics Reader*, 96.

[67] We can see some of the problems with reliance on biography in literary criticism if we consider Freud's own Shakespeare criticism. In the case mentioned above, the argument concerning Shakespeare's unresolved feelings about his father hinge upon the corroborating evidence of the dating of his father's death and the writing of *Hamlet*. Freud initially accepted the evidence presented in a study by Georg Brandes as definitive, but these dates have been disputed by later scholarship. Moreover, Freud later became convinced that the actual author of *Hamlet* was Edward de Vere and not Shakespeare, further complicating matters. See Leonard Orr, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 323-324.

[68] Sigmund Freud, Interpretation of Dreams, cited in Leonard Orr, A Dictionary of Critical Theory, 326.

[69] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text* trans. by Steven Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142.

[70] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 146.

[71] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 147.

[72] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 148.

[73] Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author," 118.

---

[74] Stanley Fish, "Biography and Intention," in William Epstein, ed., *Contesting the Subject: Essays in the Postmodern Theory and Practice of Biography and Biographical Criticism* (West Lafayette IN: Purdue University Press), 11.

[75] Stanley Fish, "Biography and Intention," 12.

[76] Cheryl Walker, "Persona Criticism and the Death of the Author," in William Epstein, ed., *Contesting the Subject: Essays in the Postmodern Theory and Practice of Biography and Biographical Criticism* (West Lafayette IN: Purdue University Press), 113.

[77] Cheryl Walker, "Persona Criticism and the Death of the Author," 113.

[78] Cheryl Walker, "Persona Criticism and the Death of the Author," 109.

CHAPTER THREE: HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

The Treasury of Abiding Reality as a literary product must be understood within its temporal home in the fourteenth century, a time of political, social, and religious ferment in Tibet. Political developments during this era included several significant events. Among these are included the fall of the century-long political hegemony of the Sakya sect with their Mongol backers, the institution of a new tradition of kingship harking back to the royal imperial period of Tibetan history, and the resultant reunification of multiple separate feudal states in Central Tibet into a single state under indigenous rule. This political unification of the country was accompanied by increasing moves towards religious institutionalization, particularly reflected in the growing dominance of monastic institutions with strong sectarian identities. This may have been driven in part by the religious ferment of the preceding centuries coming to an end as surrounding countries such as India were swept over by Islam, and as Tibetan translation activities died down.

Thus, the fourteenth century was characterized by a move towards more centralized religious and secular authority, which in turn resulted in a strong emphasis on monastic and legal codes. Finally, in the religious sphere there was a significant shift in emphasis from ritual-based practice towards scholasticism, which was a natural consequence of the institutional shifts from local hereditary lineages toward monastic communities. During this time the famous canons of Tibetan translations of Indian Buddhist classics known as the Kangyur (*bka' 'gyur*) and Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*) were codified. Moreover, a disproportionate number of seminal religious thinkers with large literary corpora were active in Tibet during this period. Among the most prominent of these were Tsongkapa Lozang Drakpa (*tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*, 1357-1419), founder of the Geluk School, Budön Rinchendrup (*bu ston rin chen grub*, 1290-1364), compiler of the Buddhist canons, Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (*dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan*, 1292-1361), founder of the Jonangpa (*jo nang pa*) sect, and Lonchenpa, to name just a few.[1]

Longchenpa, the author of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, was a prominent figure of the period. During his lifetime he had interactions with many of the great political and religious figures of the day, and the turbulent and striking nature of events in this century naturally had

a great impact on his life. The present chapter will therefore attempt to present a historical analysis of the volatile and vital fourteenth century in Tibet to sketch out the larger social and religious context in which *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* was composed.

BACKGROUND: DECENTRALIZATION AND CREATIVE FERMENT IN THE NINTH TO THIRTEENTH CENTURIES FOLLOWING THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE EMPIRE

This section will attempt sketch the background to political and religious consolidations of the fourteenth century by demonstrating the overwhelming diversity, multiplicity, fragmentation, and so forth of the preceding period between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. To this end, I consider in particular several significant examples of trends and events that lay the groundwork for the events of the fourteenth century. This, in turn, will provide vital context to my discussion of the rhetorical conflicts taking place during that time. Rather than rhetorically evoking the multiplicity and diversity that characterize the earlier period, the conflict in the fourteenth century occurs between groups evoking *unity*—socio-political unity of law-governed processes on the one hand, and the mystical unity of the Great Perfection on the other.

THE DARK PERIOD

Following the assassination of the king Lang Darma (*glang dar ma*) by Lhalung Pelgyi Dorje (*lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje*) in 842, Tibet experienced a period of prolonged political instability and tendency towards decentralization. Tibet's low population base, large geographical expanse, and difficult terrain exacerbated this instability and decentralization, which was accompanied with a rise in political and religious ferment. Political strife and eventually civil war broke out in Tibet.[2] The royal succession was marked by intrigues involving ministers and the elder and younger queens, and power shifted back and forth between Lang Darma's purported sons Ö Sung (*'od bsrungs*) and Yumten (*yum brtan*). Indeed, recent scholarship suggests that the royal lineage of the Yarlung (*yar klung*) Dynasty came to an end with Lang Darma, since neither of his purported sons were in fact his progeny![3] Vitali reports three rebellions (*kheng log*) including the desecration of the Yarlung royal tombs occurred at the close of the ninth century and beginning of the tenth century.[4] This led to the further fragmentation of the polity to the point

where units of political authority could be measured in terms of one thousand households, or even as small as one hundred or even ten households.[5] The dynastic period had come to a close by 907, and the lineage of kings had been scattered. In a sense the definitive act here was the desecration of the tombs, especially given how dependent the empire was on the sacral cult organized around the figure of the *btsan po* and his funerary monument. The lineage of Ö Sung established itself in Yarlung (*yar klungs*), while that of Yumten retained control of Central Tibet, specifically Samye (*bsam yas*).[6] Eventually, an offshoot of Ö sung's family settled in Ngari (*mnga' ris*) and the succession of kings stabilized somewhat and continued for several generations.

Thus, the Tibetan nation became fragmented into various units known as the "five royal lineages" (*rgyal rabs lnga*) and the "ten kingdoms" (*rgyal khab bcu*).[7] Some sources describe "five royal lineages" in Central Tibet as being the Le'ang (*le'ang*), Thang (*thang*), Chin (*cin*), Han (*han*), and Tra'u (*kra'u*).[8] Later historians, in order to distinguish these kingdoms from those which were not part of the earlier "religious" kingdom renamed these five the "Later Le'ang," the "Later Thang," and so forth. These five kingdoms were established in the northern region of Tibet, while the ten "nations" (*rgyal khab*) of the Early Hro'u (*hro'u sngon ma*), U (*'u*), Min (*min*), U-yö (*'u g.yod*), T'ru (*khru'u*), the Southern Han (*han lho ma*), the Nanping (*nan phing*), the Later Hro'o (*hro'o rjes ma*), the Southern Thang (*thang lho ma*), and the Northern Han (*han byang ma*) were established in the southern region.

Military conflicts among these groups arose repeatedly during this time, and the practice of Buddhism is traditionally said to have gone into serious decline. Tradition also reports that the monastic tradition was preserved and transmitted through the ninth century monk Gongpa Rabsel (*dgongs pa rab gsal*) with the assistance of some Chinese monks.[9] Samten Karmay and others, however, have argued that it was the practice of monastic institutions and scholasticism that declined rather than Buddhist "practices" such as ritual and meditation, which very likely thrived during this period.[10] Interestingly, the ensuing period of "darkness" also proved to be a time of significant development of the Great Perfection traditions, which were evolving alongside these ritual and meditative systems.[11] The decline of the monastic institution's prestige was probably precipitated by the resentment among members of the aristocracy and members of the ruling clan towards the political influence that representatives of the monastic elite had gained in the previous reign.[12] Monastic institutions did not flourish due to economic

depression and political fragmentation, since they had to rely to such a great extent on stable social order to support their parasitic existence.

NGARI RELIGIOUS KINGS AND RINCHEN ZANGPO

The royal lineage did not disappear entirely, however, even with the collapse of the kingdom following Lang Darma's death. In fact, Vitali shows that the central Tibetan Kingdom continues in some form right into the early tenth century, and it is only with the final rebellions at that time and the desecration of the royal tombs that the dynasty comes to an end. Even after that fragments of the royal lineage continued here and there. Vitali argues that pretenders to the throne were making exaggerated claims of being heirs to the Yarlung royal lineage even when their connections were tenuous at best.[13]

Of the several branches of the royal lineage that survived in the western region of Ngari, that of the Purang (*pu hrangs*), was to be responsible for the revival of the monastic and academic side of Tibetan Buddhism in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The kings of Purang appear to have had some qualms about the forms of tantric practice that had flourished following the breakup of the empire, and attempted to control the activities of tantric practitioners of the time. Yeshe Ö and and his great-nephew Jangchup Ö in particular are said to have been instrumental in the rehabilitation of scholastic Buddhism, and are known to have made harsh polemical attacks on the multiple Great Perfection lineages of the time. Disseminators of the Great Perfection begin to refer to themselves as the "Ancients" (*rnying ma*) during this period (late tenth-early eleventh centuries) in order to distinguish themselves from the new emerging groups that stressed new transmissions from India and the revival of monastic temples with their attendant scholarly learning.[14] These "proto-Nyingmapas" were particularly concerned with the practices of "union" (*sbyor ba*) and "liberation" (*sgrol ba*) associated with *The Secret Essence Tantra* (skt. *guhyagarbha*, tib. *gsang ba'i snying po*) of the Mahāyoga class and a primary source for the Great Perfection itself. These terms had apparently come to refer at that time to the practices of sexual union and animal sacrifice.[15] Although these terms may have been understood in a more metaphysical light by many, it seems clear that Yeshe Ö expected lamas to conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, and that the teachings of Sūtra, not Tantra, were to be the basis for future developments of Buddhism in Tibet.

To counteract what they perceived to be these misinterpretations of the Buddhist teachings, Yeshe Ö and Jangchup Ö dispatched a group of young scholars to study in Kashmir. The best known and most prolific of these was the famous Richen Zangpo (*rin chen bzang po,* 958-1055). This led to the production of the lexically and stylistically consistent and state-sanctioned "new" translations (*gsar 'gyur* as opposed to the "early translations" or *snga 'gyur* of the older Great Perfection traditions), which were to become the basis of the canons codified in the fourteenth century. More significant than this, however, was Jangchup Ö's invitation to Atiśa (a.k.a. Dipaṅkara Śrījñāna), whose activities dramatically revitalized the monastic and scholastic traditions in Tibet.

The major point in this regard is that there was ferment everywhere, both in terms of translations and also revelations being produced by followers of the Bön and Nyingma traditions. During this time period different individuals and groups were initiating new lineages, new sectarian traditions, and so forth, in what was an explosion of ideas, literature, and movements. After the collapse of the empire, we see an increasing trend towards decentralization in all spheres—political, social, and religious. Then, from the mid-to-late tenth century the principal issues are, (1) decentralization continues as political power tends to be local and feudal in character, and (2) there is an explosion of translation, ideas, movements, construction of temples, and so forth. In short, the decentralization and the creative ferment were directly inter-linked.

ANCIENT VERSUS MODERN

The "Ancient" School did not exist as a self-conscious entity until approximately the eleventh century. It is with the figures of Atiśa and Rinchen Zangpo, among others, that the advent of what was to become known as the "modern" or "Sarma" schools is said to have its origin. It was in direct response to the onset of new and competing traditions, texts, textual interpretations, and rituals that followers of the older Great Perfection traditions decided to rhetorically employ the privileged term "Ancient" or "Nyingma" to refer to themselves. The choice of this term is designed to appeal to "traditional" Tibetan values, and to cast implicit doubt on the authenticity and efficacy of newer, less venerable, traditions. Samten Karmay argues that as the new doctrine of the co-ordination of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna began to appear, those who adhered chiefly to tantric traditions came to be identified as the Nyingmapa, the "Ancients." In addition,

the Nyingma followers claim that their tradition is a continuity of the early Buddhist establishment by Padmasambhava in the royal period.[16]

Geoffrey Samuel has argued that the form of Buddhism that seems to have survived the century long period of civil conflict following the Empire's disintegration was that closest to the shamanic folk religion of Tibet, i.e., a hereditary form of Tantric Buddhism.[17] Practitioners of these traditions provided ritual services to the populace and eventually became what is known today as the Nyingma tradition. During the tenth and eleventh centuries in Tibet knowledge of these ritual procedures was generally passed down in a hereditary line or shared only after a period of prolonged apprenticeship such as that of the famous Tibetan saint Milarepa (*mi la ras pa*, 1040-1123).[18]

The period following the assassination of Lang Darma, then, created a decentralized socio-political landscape that eventually resulted in a tremendously creative ferment. This advent of many new political and religious trends in Tibet culminated in the Ancient/Modern split, which was in part spurred by the arising of the religious kings of Ngari, and their purist and reformist agenda. It must be emphasized, however, that the reformist agenda of the Ngari kings was only one impetus among many. This tumult also engendered new Tibetan religious orders, which tended to emerge on the basis of particular lineages of teachers and disciples, which contributed to the great explosion of diversity, the ramifications of which would result in the religious and cultural consolidations in fourteenth century Tibet. Atiśa and his disciple Dromtönpa (*'brom ston pa*, 1003-1063) were responsible for founding the first modern Tibetan religious order, the Kadampa (*bka' gdam pa*), at Reting (*rva sgrengs*) monastery. The Sakya order was derived from the translator Drokmi (*'brog mi lo tsā ba*, d. 1071), who had traveled to India in search of Buddhist doctrines, and was founded by Könchog Gyalpo (*'khon dkon mchog rgyal po*, 1034-1102) in 1073. The Kagyü order was derived from the Indian saint Nāropa and his Tibetan followers Marpa (1012-1096) and Milarepa, and its six principal sub-sects were founded by students of Gampopa (*sgam po pa*, 1079-1167). The most important of these were the Phakmodrupa, founded by a lama of the same name, the Karmapa, founded at Tshurpu (*mtshur phu*) by Dusum Khyenpa (*dus gsum mkhyen pa*, 1110-1193) in 1185, and the Drigungpa order, founded by Jikden Gönpo (*'Jig-rten-dgon-po*, b. 1143).[19] These developments were accompanied, as discussed above, by the beginning of a shift from the prevalent emphasis on ritual and meditation, which was strongly associated with traditions of lay specialists, to an

ever-increasing emphasis on the relatively safe academic discourses of philosophy and textual exegesis, which is primarily associated with traditions emphasizing philosophy and monastic ethics. Although this is true in general, certainly ritual continued to be the glue that bound religious communities together. This shift was greatly facilitated by the official sponsorship of the royal families of western Tibet. However, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in particular, sectarian identity tended to be quite fluid, and many figures are difficult to categorize precisely in terms of their sectarian affiliations. Indeed, even the distinction between "Sarma" and "Nyingma" only slowly evolved in local circumstances, and gradually developed into a broader rubric of identification. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that tantric-based ritual systems still dominated most traditions during this period.

SAKYA PROTO-CENTRALIZATION

As Tibetan Buddhist sects founded monasteries throughout the country, their temporal power increased and the notion of Buddhist political leadership became a mainstream political reality. This led to the system of governance in Tibet known as the integration of religious and secular rule (*chos srid gnyis ldan*) in which an integrated religious and political administrative system constituting a the ruling class was established.[20] This system was characterized by the merging of secular and religious rule whereby high-ranking Buddhist monks acted as religious and political leaders, and by the ability of these monks to consolidate and develop their own spheres of influence under the patronage of the Yüan court. This very development in Tibetan religious and political history strongly supports my assertion that one may read ostensibly religious texts in light of their political rhetoric and ideology.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century Buddhist sectarian groups had become the dominant economic, political, and spiritual centers in Tibet. However, Tibet remained fragmented politically because no single sect was powerful enough to dominate the others. These newly emergent religious sects also appear to have inherited both regional and clan-based factionalism leading to an increasing sense of rivalry between them as their property, power, and influence increased. These rivalries often escalated into full-scale battles between the monasteries.[21] For the period following the collapse of the Yarlung Dynasty in 842 until Tibet came under the dominance of the Mongols in 1247, Tibet had no centralized political authority. The fall of the Yarlung Dynasty allowed many smaller states to emerge in the border

areas. The picture that emerges is one of continuity between the multiplicity, difference, divergence, fluidity, and so forth, of this period and that of the preceding dark period. These various currents are all expressed in the Great Perfection tradition, which by the fourteenth century is increasingly under attack, and which Longchenpa is evoking and critiquing in his own writing.

This situation, however, was dramatically changed with the rise of the Mongol Empire, under whose patronage one sect—that of the Sakyas—achieved predominance that allowed them to institute a limited type of political unification.[22] At this time it was no longer primarily a case of a family or clan whose strength lies in its temporal power or their regional ancestral spirit-based ideology ruling large portions of Tibet. Rather, in the Sakya we find a clan in which the prestige of the spiritual authority of institutional Buddhism with its universalizing cosmology, rhetoric, and deities are united with political authority.[23] Tucci points out that it is useful to recall that at this time that

> Monasteries were no longer simple communities gathered around some chapel, as they had been in the past; this can be seen for the three most important convents which, at the dawn of the period we are studying, vie for the Mongol emperors' favour and equally aspire to supremacy: Sa skya pa, 'Bri gung pa and Tshal pa.[24]

In 1239 or 1240 Godan, the grandson of the great Gengis (Chingghis) Khan, sent some of his troops to attack Tibet, who were able to push as far as Reting, to the North-East of Lhasa. In the following year the Mongols were convinced to abandon their plans to demand absolute submission from the Tibetans, and they withdrew from Tibet in 1241.[25] Tibetan historians suggest that the Mongolian general may have been dissuaded from conquering the region due to being impressed with the supernatural powers of a certain Drigungpa lama.[26]

At any rate, this expedition served to convince the Tibetans that they were unable to resist the Mongols militarily. Negotiations began in which the Tibetans turned to the leader of the Sakya School, Sakya Paṇḍita, to serve as their representative owing to his prestige and influence.[27] In 1244 Godan summoned Sakya Paṇḍita along with his nephews to his camp. Despite the fact that Tibetan historians portray this event in terms of the conversion of the Mongol hordes to Buddhism, it amounted to political submission to Godan and the Mongols.

Sakya Paṇḍita did not attempt to represent the status of Tibet to Godan as anything other than a vassal state.[28]

During this early period it is not at all clear that the Sakya sect enjoyed exclusive patronage by the Mongols. Different chieftains had relationships with lamas of various sects. Furthermore, the peaceful policy towards Tibet adopted by the Mongols may not have been due to the influence of the lamas, as is often suggested, but rather to a feeling of indifference. As Turrell Wylie puts it, "Tibet, whose formidable terrain was politically fragmented by local lords and lamas, posed no military threat to the Mongols, and it was all but ignored by them."[29]

However, another important Mongol chief, Kublai (Khubilai) Khan, entered into a teacher-disciple relationship with Sakya Paṇḍita's nephew, Phakpa Lodrö Gyaltsen (*'phags pa blo 'gros rgyal mtshan*, 1235-1280). The reciprocal roles of Phakpa, the religious teacher, and Kublai Khan, the religious patron, established a pattern for relations between Tibetan lamas and their Mongol patrons known as Chöyon (*mchod yon*). This well-known priest-patron political complex thus further grounded the conflation of religious and political authority in Tibet.[30] This again tends to support my argument that one may, and perhaps must, read religious rhetoric in terms of its political overtones. When Kublai was elevated to the rank of *khaghan*, the ramifications were significant for Phakpa and the Sakya order. In 1264 the Office for Buddhist Affairs was established and Phakpa was named as its head.[31]

Although the Sakyapas, supported by the military might of their Mongol patrons, held nominal control of the Tibetan nation, this was probably little more than a rule in name only, especially by the dissolution of the Yüan Dynasty in the mid fourteenth century. This is not to say, however, that the Sakyapas did not receive special dispensations from the Mongol court, but rather to indicate that their possession of dominion over Tibet was not absolute.[32] The Sakya hierarchs certainly did enjoy certain privileges, thanks in part to the belief on the part of the Mongols that they held special occult powers. After some time, however, the Mongols began to distrust the Tibetan monks, who attempted to appropriate political authority for themselves.[33] In fact, the Mongols tried to limit the political authority of the Sakya religious figures, either by putting military and administrative power in the hands of secular ministers (*dpon chen*), or by distributing favors to the abbots of competing religious factions.

Thus, the Sakyapas did not succeed at enforcing their rule either over monasteries affiliated with other sects, or over the larger political units known as "myriarchies" (*khri skor*), and their

supposed monopoly on temporal power in Tibet was largely a fiction.[34] Thus, despite the apparent emergence of a new centralized unity, the reality did not quite parallel the rhetoric in truth.

PROLIFERATION OF NEW TEXTUAL MATERIALS

In general it may be safely said that there exited a tension in Asia during this time between various modes of textual "production." On one hand, we find the more conventional production of textual materials taking place under the aegis of institutional bodies such as monasteries with their "authentic" scholarship and/or translation. On the other hand we encounter the production of what are sometimes referred to as "apocryphal" texts through the process of discovery and/or revelation. In 8th-9th century Indian Buddhist discourse, for example, this tension is exemplified by the epistemological and ontological speculations that characterized scholastic discourse, and the more visionary textual materials being produced by wandering yogins who fell outside traditional institutional boundaries. It could be that such tensions are particularly prevalent in cultures in which we see the rise of vernacular literature as was the case in Tibet at this time. Not only are the Tibetan literati at this time importing and appropriating distinctly Indian genres and forms, they are also developing their own literary forms, including indigenous works based on local revelations and so forth. This two-pronged evolution inevitably leads to some controversy as to what constitutes "legitimate" or normative discourse, the former appealing to claims of authenticity and venerability, and the latter making claims to immediacy and proximity.

The establishment of so many new religious movements during the eleventh through thirteenth centuries at that time was accompanied by a massive influx of textual material. The adherents of the so-called Modern schools were rhetorically concerned with the purportedly corrupt nature of older lineages in Tibet, and aimed at rectifying this situation with the systematic importation and translation of new and non-corrupt texts of both "sūtric," or exoteric, and "tantric," or esoteric classifications. Thus, the founding figures of these new movements themselves were often translators in their own right, and traveled to India to retrieve authentic textual materials. Marpa and Drokmi are two prominent examples of such figures. Similarly, the production of indigenous Tibetan exegetical material commenting on the newly arriving texts was also increasing at this time. These included the "Stages of the Teachings" (*bstan rim*)

style compositions inspired by Atiśa's famous *Lamp for the Path* (skt. *bodhipathapradīpa*, tib. *byang chub kyi lam sgron me*),[35] and Tibetan commentaries on Indian *Śāstras* such as those composed by Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, et al, to name a few.[36] In addition, a wide variety of other literary genres slowly erupted, including biographical, historical, poetic works, and so forth.

Proponents of the Nyingma traditions were also involved in the production of new literary materials during this period, probably in response to being inundated with new canonical materials in translation purportedly superseding their own lineally transmitted textual traditions. However, the predominant form these new Nyingma texts took was that of the "treasure" text or "terma" (*gter ma*) rather than translations. As Janet Gyatso points out, texts belonging to this classification cannot properly be characterized as representing a single genre since the range of literary genres within such texts almost repeats that of Tibetan literature as a whole.[37] Rather than a specific literary genre, the term "treasure" is more a reference to its mode of transmission. At most, one could discuss them in terms of particular types of anthologies, but even there include only a subset. Although such "treasures" are often discovered in the ground, where they are thought to have been deposited by prominent religious figures of the past, the etymology of the Tibetan term *gter* functions metaphorically as well. Sometimes, for example, these texts are thought to manifest within the actual mind of the discoverer, and hence the important point about "treasures" is that they have revealed from a place of concealment, whether geographic or psychic in nature. Such texts are often concerned with the creation of entire ritual and/or doctrinal systems (*skor*), but several important treasure cycles such as the *Maṇi bka'-'bum* and the *bKa'-thang sde-lnga* are specifically concerned with history. These latter texts are especially significant because they were to become the mythological basis for several ideological claims made by competing individuals and groups during the fractious fourteenth century, as we shall see below.

In this section we have portrayed the overwhelming diversity of textual production during period prior to the fourteenth century in terms of translations, indigenous literature, and apocrypha. This state of creative chaos gave rise to a constantly evolving literary production with all the associated new lineages and traditions emerging everywhere.

In the above discussion we have seen the tension between the two dominant modes of religious discourse in Tibet during this time period, and especially the respective forms of literary output each of these discourses tends to produce.

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: NATIONALISM AND POLITY

When we turn our attention to the fourteenth century during which Longchenpa lived his entire life, we find a series of striking transformations that mark the formation of classical Tibetan religious civilization. Politically, by the mid-fourteenth century the Sakya political hegemony over Tibet had drastically weakened, and we begin to see the emergence of what Georges Dreyfus has called Tibetan "proto-nationalism."[38] This decline was mirrored and indirectly affected by the parallel weakening of the Yüan Dynasty in China. Up until this time, the Mongols had been the Sakya School's greatest religious patrons in the religious sphere, and their military backers in the political sphere. By the mid-fourteenth century, however, the Mongols found themselves busy trying to shore up their own authority in China, which left their active role in Tibetan politics significantly diminished. As the Sakya political grip on Tibet became weaker, other groups challenged their authority and attempted to establish their own political dominance. These groups frequently had specific sectarian religious affiliations or were clan-based, and often both. Thus, these various groups utilized their specific religious and family-based allegiances in their pursuit of temporal power and influence. In addition to the Sakya School, these groups included the Drigungpas (*'bri gung pa*), the Phakmodrupas (*phag mo gru pa*), and so forth. The eventual demise of the Sakya rule thus give way to the emergence of a new tradition of kingship established by T'ai Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen (*tai si tu byang chub rgyal mtshan*, 1302-1364), the charismatic leader of the Lang (*rlangs*) clan and the Phakmodru sub-sect of the Kargyü (*bka' brgyud*) School. By 1354 the Sakya influence and hegemony had almost completely dwindled as a direct result of the martial and political activities of this extraordinary leader.

The Phakmodru was both a sub-sect of the Kargyü order founded by Phakmodrupa (*phag mo gru pa*, 1110-1170) and an administrative political unit with close ties to the religious school. The former was originally affiliated with the Drigung order and was based at the monastery of Densa Thel (*gdan sa thil*), but after some time became closely associated with the Lang (*rlangs*) clan, and the administrative unit was based at Neudong (*sne'u gdong*), situated at the mouth of the Yarlung valley.[39] The high degree of influence that the Phakmodrupa abbot possessed with the Mongols resulted in the establishment of the Phakmodrupa myriarchy (*khri skor*). Thus the

development of the Phakmodrup was characterized by the parallel development of its religious center at Densa Thel, and its political center at Neudong.

Although the grant of lands and revenues allotted by the Mongol leader Hülegü to the Phakmodru myrirachy at the time of its formation was enormous, over time large portions were ceded to other groups such as the Drigung and the Yabzang (*g.ya bzangs*), both of which had longstanding ties with the Phakmodrupas. The competition for influence and resources among these groups led to endless disputes.[40] By the early fourteenth century, the fortunes of the Phakmodrupas had declined significantly. This decline reached its nadir when their chieftain (*khri dpon*) Gyaltsen Kyap (*rgyal mtshan skyabs*, ruled 1318-1322) was tried and deposed for murder, adultery, and general profligacy.[41] Shortly after this, Jangchup Gyaltsen was installed as the new *khri dpon* by the powers at Sakya. Jangchup Gyaltsen had been educated at Sakya as a monk and administrator. Although he clearly possessed some ecclesiastical status, he excelled primarily in secular matters.[42] Upon taking authority, Jangchup Gyaltsen began reorganizing the myriarchy (*khri skor*) and managing its estates. Over the course of the years, several estates formerly belonging to the Phakmodrupas had been lost to neighboring myriarchies, and Jangchup Gyaltsen undertook to reclaim them in a series of long drawn out disputes. The nature of these conflicts was both legal and military, and they were rarely decided in favor of the Phakmodrupas. Moreover, these disputes were to become the origin for ongoing enmity and outright civil war between the Phakmodrupas and other Kargyü sub-sects such as the Yabzang (*g.ya' bzangs*) and the Tsalpa (*'tshal pa*). Even the Sakya government became involved in these struggles after a time.

Thus began Jangchup Gyaltsen's long series of legal and military conflicts with his numerous adversaries and detractors such as the Drigungpas, the Yabzangpas, the Tsalpas, and the Sakyapas. Over the course of the next twenty to thirty years Jangchup Gyaltsen was in near constant conflict with these and other parties. Although several tribunals (*khrims ra*) were held that restored the disputed estates to the Phakmodrupas, these decisions were most often mitigated by circumstances adverse to their interests, or officials in league with Jangchup Gyaltsen's adversaries ruled against him.

Jangchup Gyaltsen and his detractors were engaged not only in nearly constant legal and military wrangling, but they frequently participated in intrigues as well. One of the more notable incidents of intrigue was a plot by some of his prominent detractors in 1336 to kidnap

Jangchup Gyaltsen. When he was appointed to the post of *khri dpon* by the Sakya rulers, after his profligate relative Gyaltsen Kyap had been deposed, members of that side of the family began to plot how to regain the power and prestige of which they felt they had been unjustly deprived. This plot involved Sönam Gyaltsen (*bsod nams rgyal mtshan*), the alleged nephew of the Gyaltsen Kyap, who was in league with a high official of the Department for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs and leader of the Lhakhang (*lha khang*) Sakya sub-sect named Wangchuk Tsöndru (*dbang phyug brtson 'grus*, ca. 12th century) or Wangtsön for short. Jangchup Gyaltsen was invited to a banquet and treacherously arrested. He was then urged to recognize Sönam Gyaltsen as the legitimate *khri dpon* and to relinquish his tiger-head seal of office.[43] This seal was the sole means by which one could legitimate orders made by the *khri dpon*. Jangchup Gyaltsen refused to recognize the usurper, and somehow managed to get word to Neudong not to surrender to the plotters. Although Jangchup Gyaltsen was eventually released, this incident became the origin of a bitter rivalry between Jangchup Gyaltsen and Wangtsön.[44] This conflict escalated in later years when Wangtsön supported the Tsalpa and Yabzang myriarchies in their efforts to overthrow Jangchub Gyaltsen.

In 1349, the Sakya School was beset by internal conflict, with Wangtsön heading the Lhakhang estate (*lha khang bla brang*) and the three remaining Sakya estates led by Gyalwa Zangpo (*rgyal ba bzang po*, date unknown). Wangtsön eventually defeated Gyalwa Zangpo to become the leader of the Sakyas.[45] During this time Jangchup Gyaltsen had been summoned to Sakya to stand trial for disloyalty to the Sakya government. Jangchup Gyaltsen, counseled by his advisors, disregarded the summons and resumed the office of myriarch (*khri dpon*), thus setting the stage for a final showdown with Wangtsön.[46] He joined forces with Gyalwa Zangpo's group against Wangtsön and eventually prevailed in a large-scale military conflict, which led in time to the demise of the Sakya and the Phakmodrupas' rise to power.

Even after the fall of the Sakya regime, the Phakmodrupas increasingly came into conflict with the Drigungpas, then the leading power in the northern part of the Ü (*dbus*) province in central Tibet. In 1353 Jangchup Gyaltsen, as the leading political figure in central Tibet with close spiritual associations with the Drigungpas (the Drigung school was founded by a disciple of the founder of the Phakmodru sect), was called upon to select the junior and senior administrators (*sgom pa*) of the Dringung hierarchy. He chose Rinchen Dorje (*rin chen rdo rje*) and Kunga Rinchen (*kun dga' rin chen*) as senior and junior administrators, respectively, a

decision that may have been the ultimate origin of the subsequent hostility between himself and the latter later on. After the death of Rinchen Dorje, Kunga Rinchen became senior administrator, although it appears he never received official sanction from the imperial court.[47] Kunga Rinchen, after becoming the senior administrator, sought to reassert the military power and influence of the Drigung sect in the face of the rising Phakmodrupa influence.[48] Having issued an ultimatum to Jangchup Gyaltsen and his followers that left no room for anything but a military solution, Kunga Rinchen and the Drigungpas were decisively defeated.

This rise was solidified in 1354 when the Yüan emperor appointed Jangchup Gyaltsen to the official post of *da si-tu* (cabinet minister) and bestowed on him a diploma of hereditary rights to rule over Tibetan local regimes. Jangchup Gyaltsen established thirteen political districts or "counties" (*rdzong*), and instituted a legal code of fifteen laws that were loosely based on the legal codes from Tibet's dynastic period.[49] This code, called the Neudong Legal Code, addressed issues such as determining appropriate punishments, means of interrogation, arrest, fines, and so forth.[50]

These struggles between the various leaders in Tibet, as well as the rise of Jangchup Gyaltsen and the Phakmodrupas coincided with the decline of the Yüan Dynasty in China. Jangchup Gyaltsen was able not only to undermine the Sakya political power, but was able to gain recognition for his new position from the weakened Mongol court with the title *ta'i si tu*. The appearance of this charismatic chief, under whom the Tibetan capital was shifted back to central Tibet (at Neudong in the Yarlung valley), the center of the Dynastic Kings, was accompanied by a resurgence of a national sentiment after the long period of Mongol domination (for which the Sakyapas may have been held partially responsible).[51] Dreyfus argues that the development of feelings of Tibetan collective identity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was dominated by the creative imagining of the once powerful Tibetan empire that flourished between the seventh and ninth centuries.[52] The revival of this proto-nationalistic sentiment appears also to have been connected with the flowering of the Terma (*gter ma*) or "Treasure" tradition of "buried books." For example, around the time of the fall of the Sakya hegemony and the rise of the Phakmodrupas, the important treasure revealer (*gter ston*) Urgyen Lingpa (*o rgyan gling pa*, b. 1323) "discovered" a biography of Padmasambhhava entitled Padma thang yig, which is purported to contain a prophesy concerning the birth of Jangchup Gyaltsen.[53]

Jangchup Gyaltsen's policy of political and cultural renewal played on the sentiment of the Tibetan people by evoking the cultural memory of the days of the Yarlung (*yar klung*) dynasty (ca. seventh-ninth centuries). During the royal dynasty Tibet was united around its king, governed by capable ministers and militarily strong enough to protect its own borders from China and other predators. Hence, Jangchup Gyaltsen's very visible policy promised a return to the splendor of this once great nation.

Jangchup Gyaltsen himself had a great interest in his own narrative. This is evidenced by his prolific apologetic-cum-autobiographical writings including the *rlangs po ti bse ru* and the *si tu bka' chems*, both significantly large works.[54] In addition, Jangchup Gyaltsen was the official patron of the composition of the important historical work *The Clear Mirror of Royal Genealogies (rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long)* by Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen (*bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan*, 1315-1375).[55] Hence, it is quite clear that Jangchup Gyaltsen was very interested in ideological representation. Jangchup Gyaltsen built himself up as the dominant political leader in Central Tibet at the time, but political conflicts often broke down along sectarian lines. Hence, although these conflicts were often about mundane matters of taxation, land, property rights, and so forth, these are still played out in terms of religious discourse. Jangchup Gyaltsen's basic maneuver in both his own writings and in the historiography he patronized was to draw upon the cultural memory of the inhabitants of Central Tibet by evoking an image of pre-tenth century Tibet, a time when Tibet was a unified country that dominated the region militarily.

This nostalgia for the Dynastic Period was not unique to Jangchup Gyaltsen, his clan and religious sect. In fact almost all competing groups in post-tenth century Tibet, including the Nyingmas and Bönpos, looked back to this time during which Tibet's international cultural and military prestige was at its peak, seeking to rhetorically utilize their real or imagined connection to it. Thus, just as Jangchup Gyaltsen sought to move forward his personal, political, social, and to some extent religious agendas through the nostalgic creation of an "imaginal" Tibet, so too were competing groups putting forward their own visions of what Tibet might have been, and might become again. So, whereas Jangchup Gyaltsen is harking back to the Imperial and military hierarchies from the eighth century, Longchenpa (and others) are rhetorically evoking different hierarchies—spiritual hierarchies—dating from the same period.

In fact, the ways in which various Tibetan individuals and groups utilized religious narratives (*chos 'byung*), and so forth of their imperial past to create their respective "imaginal" Tibets goes to the heart of the general argument I am attempting to make in this thesis—i.e., that individuals and groups with conflicting interests will draw upon ostensibly spiritual discourse as a means of promoting their own agendas. In the present case, these parties used religious narratives, works of ritual and philosophy, and so forth, to articulate specific visions of Tibetan identity and nationhood.

CODIFICATION OF SECTARIAN TRADITIONS: THE RISE OF THE MONASTERY, SCHOLASTICISM, AND INCARNATE LAMAS

At the beginning of the tenth century, at least in central and western Tibet, there was hardly a monastic tradition at all, and certainly no religious institutional centers with any significant political role. According to the traditional accounts, Buddhist monasticism was initiated at Samye monastery with the ordination of the original seven Tibetan Buddhist monks (termed the "seven who were tested" or the *sad mi bdun*), but this lineage lasted no more than two centuries.[56] During the period between the end of the dynastic period (ca. 842) and the eleventh century, Buddhist ritual and practice was carried out primarily in small local contexts, usually by hereditary priests and other non-monastic figures. Although certain hereditary lineages, such as that of the *Khon* family of the Sakya School, eventually emerged to preside over large monastic complexes and wielded significant secular power, during the ninth and tenth centuries hereditary lineages were much more modest.[57] The reestablishment of the dynastic lineage in western Tibet, the arrival of Atiśa, and the founding of the Kadampa order, however, initiated a revival of the academic and monastic side of Buddhism. It would be inaccurate to characterize this movement towards the revitalization of monastic and academic ideals as entirely non-tantric, and what emerged was a largely a synthesis of these two streams, but increasingly concentrated in an institutional locus. This was accompanied by a renewed interest in tantra, but with a strong emphasis on purity and authenticity, leading to a series of "new translations" (*snga 'gyur*) of tantric texts. The gradual evolution of the concept of a Tantric lama who was the head of a physical monastery filled with monastic monks, as in the case of the hierarchs of the Sakya order, offered a model for this synthesis.[58] The monastic complex at Sakya became one of

the premiere centers for the teaching of the New Tantras. Although the Kargyüpas had a different model of monastic organization, eventually it also developed centers of strong monastic and academic activity associated with the Phakmodru, Drigung, Drukpa, Taklung, and Karma sub-sects. These institutions are strongly identified in terms of their sectarian, regional, and in some cases family affiliations.

The rise of sectarian traditions is marked by a focus on their own sense of identity with the concomitant emphasis on their respective monastic bases, scholastic handbooks (*yig cha*) relating to their "own systems" (*rang lugs*), and the refutation of "others' systems" (*gzhan lugs*). Although such monastic handbooks did not reach full flower until considerably later, the trends and forces that resulted in the rigid sense of sectarian identity that gave rise to such handbooks were already much in evidence during this period. In fact, these forces may well have been initiated considerably earlier with the composition of, for example, Sakya Paṇḍita's *Introduction to Scholarship* mentioned in an earlier chapter. The trend towards strict sectarian identity was further exemplified by the development of the so-called "polemical" (*dgag lan*) genre of Tibetan philosophical writing discussed by Donald Lopez in a recent essay.[59]

In the period prior to the fourteenth century, however, such strong sectarian identity was not the norm. Reviewing the contents of the biographies of notable religious figures of the time, for example, we find that prominent Tibetan holy men were generally eclectic in their spiritual backgrounds.

- Budön (1290-1364), for instance, the one person perhaps most responsible for the codification and closing of the Buddhist canons in Tibet, was himself from a Nyingma family, and his father was a prominent lama (*bla chen*). In fact, tradition asserts that Budön exerted himself in the study and practice of "all doctrinal cycles of the Ancient Secret Mantra without exception" at the age of eight.[60] He later went on to become an acknowledged expert in the *Kālacakra-tantra*, and hence was in dialogue with scholars and practitioners from diverse sectarian backgrounds.
- Tsongkapa, founder of the Geluk School, was first ordained by the fourth Karmapa Rolpay Dorje (*rol pa'i rdo rje*, 1340-1383), studied with teachers from all different schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and his chief teacher, Rendawa (*red mda' ba gzhon nu blo gros*, 1349-1412), was a lama of the Sakya School.[61]

- Dolpopa Sherap Gyaltsen, founder of the Jonang School, was raised in a Nyingma family and studied traditional scholastic topics such as epistemology (*tshad ma*), Prajñāparamitā (*phar phyin*), the Five Treatises of Maitreya (*byams chos sde lnga*), Madhyamaka (*dbu ma*), and so forth at the great Sakya monastery. After this he traveled to central Tibet where he took up the study of Great Perfection and then to Jonang, where he took a great interest in the *Kālacakratantra (dus kyi 'khor lo)*. Following that, Dolpopa traveled widely throughout Tibet, visiting monasteries from all different sectarian traditions, giving teachings and initiations.[62]
- Longchenpa himself, perhaps the most important systematic thinker of the Great Perfection tradition, studied all the traditional scholastic subjects as well as the Tantras of the new schools before embarking on his project of revitalizing the Nyingma tradition.

The pattern that emerges at this time, however, is one of increasing calcification of sectarian identity. These major figures, each of whom was a founder or codifier of a major religious movement, were all raised and educated in eclectic and diverse religious atmospheres. Moreover, their biographies are filled with accounts of peripatetic peregrinations, suggesting, perhaps, the absence of a strong institutional identity, at least in the earlier portions of their lives.

Tsongkapa, for instance, is well known to have studied with prominent lamas from nearly every tradition of Tibetan Buddhism in his day. He received his first ordination from the fourth Karmapa, and his principle teacher, Rendawa, was a highly regarded Sakya lama. Nevertheless, in ideological terms Tsongkapa self-consciously modeled his religious movement on the earlier Kadampa School, which was a self-styled monastic "reform" movement. Morever, in founding the Gandenpa (*dga' ldan pa*) or Gelukpa (*dge lugs pa*) School, Tsongkapa set in motion an organization that eventually dominated Tibet politically and religiously, and became the institution against which nearly all other sects of Tibetan Buddhism defined themselves.

Similarly, Budön Rinchendrup's early career was marked by an eclectic educational background and is known for his encyclopedic indices of tantric materials from a variety of sources. Nevertheless, he is justifiably most famous for his role in codifying the authoritative Buddhist canons in Tibet, an act that is by its nature exclusionary and differentiating, and he did in fact exclude scriptures held as authoritative by competing schools, notably the Ancients.

In addition, despite his eclectic background, Budön and his followers became known as proponents of the "Budön System" (*bu lugs*), another indication of the trend toward rigid sectarian identities during this period.

A slightly different case is that of Dolpopa Sherap Gyaltsen, a pivotal figure in the Jonangpa School. Like the other figures being considered here, Dolpopa's biography mentions his diverse educational background, and in particular his interest in *Perfection of Wisdom* literature and the *Kālacakra Tantra*, both of which are widely revered in all sectarian traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. However, due to Dolpopa's unorthodox interpretations of these materials, with his emphasis on the doctrine of "Other-Emptiness" (*gzhan stong*) that identifies ultimate reality as the Buddha-nature inherent in all living beings, his school was harshly criticized, and eventually marginalized. Thus, Dolpopa may have come to his strong sense of sectarian identity as a result of a certain embattled mentality.

Longchenpa also fits this profile to a great extent. As we shall see in the following chapter, Longchenpa spent the early part of his career studying a wide variety of topics, ranging from ritual, medicine, poetics, philosophy, meditation, and so forth. He studied not only with masters from his own sect, but with masters from other sects as well, and was well versed in the scriptures of both the Modern and Ancient traditions. Nevertheless, it may be safely said that the main thrust of Longchenpa's career was to systematize the heterogeneous materials of the Ancient School (in particular those relating to the Great Perfection traditions), and to demonstrate its validity and relevance in the face of the increasing dominance of the Modern schools and their forms of discourse. Starting from around the eleventh century, followers of the Nyingma School found their spiritual and political influence diminishing. Their emphasis on ritual and praxis, as well as the aphoristic or poetic nature of a large portion of their literature, was being overtaken by the logical and epistemological discourses favored by the newer sects, and the aristocratic families who formerly served as the basis for their political influence were being displaced by the emergence of large-scale monastic/political institutions.

Other factors point towards the increasing trend towards rigid sectarian identities during this period. The gradual disappearance of new Buddhist texts was one such factor. By the thirteenth, and certainly by the fourteenth centuries, the flow of new Buddhist literary material had all but been eliminated. This was due to the nearly complete eradication of Buddhism in North India precipitated by the Muslim invasions that took place between the eleventh and

thirteenth centuries. It is interesting to note, however, that although production of apocryphal "treasure texts" (*gter ma*) continued into the seventeenth century (and indeed until the present day), the period of greatest activity for such texts fell generally between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Indeed, production is particularly active during the crucial fourteenth century, a time during which the production and reception of new canonical material from India and elsewhere is on the wane.[63] Thus, as the influx of texts tapered off, literary energies shifted from production and translation to collation, codification, editing, and so forth, all of which are associated with the process of canon creation. As alluded to above, this very process is inherently exclusionary and differentiating, and thus lends itself quite easily to the construction of conceptual boundaries between sectarian traditions. In addition, the focus shifted to the interpretation and explication of the newly fixed canons.

Related with the new era of Tibetan intellectual history that made possible the creation of scriptural canons was the turn by religious specialists away from ritual studies to academic, scholastic studies, particularly epistemology and logic. The fourteenth century saw the establishment of large-scale monastic institutions where the source of prestige was not knowledge of ritual procedures or techniques as it might have been in the past but where knowledge of scriptures was particularly valorized. This created special tensions for figures such as Longchenpa, who had to accommodate both of these traditions, i.e., that of yogic/ritual specialists and that of scholastics.

Taking the place of the land-holding aristocracy, monastic institutions were increasingly the organized centers of political and economic power. One of the principal ways monastic institutions were able to displace other competing institutions in order to centralize their institutional authority was the creation of the so-called "tulku" (*sprul sku*) system. The tulku system is a means of transmitting and maintaining power and authority without being beholden to clan or family. This Tibetan system of selecting lamas according to the principle of rebirth is well known. The institution of incarnated lamas is derived from the basic idea of rebirth, i.e., the notion that a saint can be reborn in the guise of a new embodiment while remaining essentially the same person. This belief is supported by the prominent role of the bodhisattva (*byang chub sems dpa'*) in the Mahāyāna ideology prevalent in Tibet. Bodhisattvas are beings held to have reached a spiritual level that no longer requires them to take birth involuntarily, but who nevertheless continue to be reborn out of compassion for sentient beings.

It is also held that these beings are able to manifest numerous embodiments or incarnations simultaneously. It is on the basis of this belief, then, that the prestige of the institution of the incarnate lama rests, and on which the spiritual/political hierarchy of Tibetan Buddhism stands.

When a lama who is the head of a monastery or occupies an important monastic office is about to die, he is normally expected to predict his rebirth and give some details about location, family, and so forth. On the basis of these predictions and other divinatory procedures, officials of the monastery go to find the child two or three years after the lama's death. Ideally the child will demonstrate some remarkable signs such as a memory of his previous life before he is confirmed as the correct incarnation or *tulku (sprul sku*, lit. "emanation body"). The concept of tulku or incarnate lama seems to have first arisen in the Kargyü (*bka' brgyud*) order, and was connected with the idea of individuals controlling their rebirths. The theory and procedures surrounding the concept of tulku seems to have developed gradually during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It has been suggested that this innovation would have made sense in terms of the political circumstances of the day. Sakya influence was declining, and Karma Kargyü followers were their principal adversaries for power and prestige at the Mongol court. The system provided a way to secure a recognized successor to a celibate monk that avoided the Sakya system of a hereditary lineage in which some were celibate monks and others were laymen. This system of recognizing incarnations of former prominent monks and yogis spread to other traditions and monasteries during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[64]

Throughout this section I have tried to emphasize the way in which sectarian boundaries are becoming increasingly rigid during the fourteenth century in Tibet. Based primarily on biographical material, we can safely assume that the sense of sectarian identity prior to this period was far more fluid than it eventually became. Whereas initially a religious person was permitted some flexibility or indeterminacy in terms of their sectarian affiliations, as the cultural and intellectual ferment of the relative chaos of new practices and ideas begins to decline, the tendency becomes increasingly one of consolidation and systematization. This was achieved through the various means of closing literary canons, concentrating power within institutions, routinization of charisma in the individuals through rule by incarnation, and normalization of discourse. This is not to suggest that the transition can be fixed to a particular moment in time, but that these were undeniable trends that would fully coalesce centuries later in the relatively sterile intellectual culture of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries.

LITERARY DEVELOPMENTS: CANONIZATION

The trends discussed above mark a turn in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries towards groups identifying themselves in terms of their respective sectarian traditions. This was perhaps most pronounced in the emerging practice of creating "canons" of authentic Buddhist scripture. From the earliest times of the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, the canonical treatises and their commentaries had been translated into Tibetan. As early as the beginning of the ninth century these translations had become so numerous and the technical vocabulary devised by the various translators so varied that is was found necessary to perform a systematic revision of the translations to re-edit them in a more uniform style. In the beginning of the eleventh century the translation of texts again became actively pursued, particularly in Western Tibet by Rinchen Zangpo and his colleagues. After the arrival of Atiśa in Tibet in 1042, translation activity also began to spread again in central Tibet and southern Tibet, where the great Kargyü master Marpa Chökyi Lodrö (*mar pa chos kyi blo gros,* 1012-1096), among others, was particularly active.[65]

By the beginning of the fourteenth century the number of sūtras and śāstras available in the Tibetan language was considerable, and the time was ripe for a massive codification of these materials. Also, since the flow of new texts from India had decreased significantly since the twelfth century following the Muslim invasions of Northern India, the appearance of new authoritative texts that would necessitate further revisions of the canons was increasingly rare.

With the rise to power of the Sakya monastic institution, the age of the master scholar was inaugurated as is suggested by the prominence of the *Introduction to Scholarship* by Sakya Paṇḍita mentioned in an earlier chapter. Having inherited a vast amount of translated materials it was now the task of the new scholars to organize five centuries of accumulated textual material. Budön became the most prominent of these early compilers, establishing the contents of, and editing, the two Tibetan canonical collections of translated Buddhist scripture, *The Translations of the Buddhas' Own Precepts (bka' 'gyur),* and *The Translations of the Treatises (bstan 'gyur).* The former was a collection of the discourses attributed directly to the Buddha or Buddhas, while the latter was a collection of the many commentaries thereon, in addition to treatises on grammar, logic, rhetoric, medicine, and so forth. Other editions soon followed compiled by Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, Tshalpa Kunga Dorje (*tshal pa kun dga' rdo rje,* 1309-

1364), and Jangchup Gyaltsen.[66] The project of determining what scriptures would be deemed valid or authentic had distinct political ramifications. The decision, for example, pointedly to omit many of the texts revered by followers of the Nyingma School was a clear statement about that school's authority and prestige. Budön viewed the increasing number of Treasure Texts and their "heretical" theories as a dangerous corruption of Buddhism that necessitated the closing of the Buddhist canon in Tibet. He gives the following rationale for the exclusion of the Nyingma Tantras in his *Religious History*:

> Regarding the ancient translations of the rNying-ma Tantras, the lo-tsa-ba Rin-chen bzang-po, Lha bla-ma Ye-shes 'od, Pho-brang Zhi-ba 'od, 'Gos-khug-pa Lhas btsas and others were of the opinion that they (the rNying-ma Tantras) did not represent pure Tantras. My teacher lo-tsa-ba Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan and Rig-ral, as well as others, maintained that they were real Tantras, because they had found the Indian original texts at bSam-yas, and had discovered parts of the Vajrakila Tantra in Nepal. In my opinion it is better to leave them out, without expressing an opinion (on their authenticity).[67]

This danger was so strongly felt that Sakya Paṇḍita himself invokes the intervention of a temporal power to stop the discovery of Treasure Texts, stating "if there were a royal law, (the propagators of) books extracted from hidden places and the doctrines stolen from others should be punished."[68] In fact, Nyingma followers found it necessary to collate their own authoritative canon, *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*, in response to being excluded from the emerging canons of the dominant schools of Buddhism from at least the fourteenth century onwards.

In addition to the proliferation of Buddhist canonical materials at this time, followers of the Bönpo tradition were also engaged in the production of their own canons. In fact, Bönpos have their own vast literature that is not, as some suppose, simply a collection of plagiarized Buddhist texts.[69] Just as Tibetan Buddhists were in the process of codifying their own Kangyur and Tengyur during this period, Bönpo were also immersed in the redaction of their own Kangyur, i.e., a collection of texts regarded as the authentic and original teachings of the enlightened Tönpa Shenrap (*ston pa gshen rab*) as well as other historical and quasi-historical figures. The Bön tradition holds that the early kings of Tibet were followers of Bön up until the

rule of King Trigum Tsanpo (*gri gum btsan po*), who is said to have persecuted their faith. As a result of this persecution, a large number of Bön texts were hidden so that they might be preserved for future generations. This marks the emergence of the Bönpo "treasure (*gter ma*) tradition. Hence, the Bönpo Kangyur consists primarily of "treasures" that had been concealed during various periods of persecution, and then discovered by various "revealers" (*gter ston*) in succeeding centuries. Bönpos also claim that it was in fact the Buddhists who appropriated many of their sacred texts into Buddhist texts, and not the reverse as is often asserted in Buddhist circles.[70]

Bönpos claim that the rediscovery of the texts comprising their Kangyur began around the tenth century. Although present research is not sufficient to ascertain the precise date of the codification of the Bönpo Kangyur, it appears to contain no text that has come to light after 1386, and Per Kvaerne suggests 1450 as the likely date for the completion of the canon.[71]

ADVENT OF WOODBLOCK PRINTS

Not only was the production of actual literature increasing in terms of its sheer numbers, with the advent of the woodblock distribution of these works was greatly facilitated. It is probably fair to assume that only a few literate and/or educated monks were able to gain access to textual materials prior to this time and distribution was profoundly local. Up until the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, the production of the textual artifacts had largely been a matter of laboriously copying and editing hand-written manuscripts. Although it is not impossible that the technique for carving wooden printing blocks reached Tibet from China before the fifteenth century, there is no evidence for any Tibetan book being produced in that manner before the printing of *The Translations of the Buddha's Words (bka' 'gyur)* in 1411.[72] Such a printing process requires a corps of highly trained wood carvers, since every letter must be carved with great care and precision. Snellgrove and Richardson suggest that a skilled carver requires a week to ten days to carve a single woodblock.[73] This new technology allowed Tibetan scholars and academics to reproduce as many copies of their Buddhist texts as they desired which in turn facilitated the widespread distribution of these materials. In fact, although this technique has long since been surpassed by more modern ones, Tibetans have continued to be attached to it up until very recently for traditional and sentimental reasons, and it was not until the twentieth century that they began to show some interest in more modern methods. The woodblock

technology also facilitated the fixing of the (various) canons, since things became more widely known due to more broader dissemination. Accordingly, it became correspondingly more difficult to introduce new and hitherto unknown texts into the canon.

THE NYINGMA SITUATION

In a certain sense the Nyingma School seems lost in this era in which the Modern Schools are codifying their identities and consolidating their positions in a myriad of ways. There is little mention of the activities of the school as such from chronicles of this period outside the school's own literature. On the other hand, the fourteenth century is a time when figures such as Jangchup Gyaltsen and others are appropriating distinctly Nyingma materials such as the "Treasure" teaching, mythology, and so forth in order to legitimize their own political pretensions. In particular, mythological cycles concerned with the dynastic period and the figures of Padmasambhava, Songtsen Gampo, Avalokiteshvara and others were widely influential during this period in the formation of new religious and political ideologies in Tibet. This was probably in part because Tibetans were reassuming control of their own country from the Mongols and hence needed their own specifically Tibetan mythological basis for political authority. Also, although the Nyingma School's institutional and political profile is minimal during this time (as indeed it was up until the 17^{th}-18^{th} centuries), individual authors and visionaries affiliated with the school were gaining prominence in the religious and aesthetic domains. In particular, the Tertöns (*gter ston*) or "Treasure Revealers" were becoming increasingly visible on the Tibetan literary and religious landscape. Important exponents of this trend include Ürgyen Lingpa (*o rgyan gling pa,* 1323-1360?), the "discoverer" or author of the famous mythological text called *Injunctions of Padmasambhava* (*pad ma'i bka' thang, bka' thang sde lnga)* that explicitly elaborated and developed the mythology of Padmasambhava. As mentioned above, Jangchup Gyaltsen self-consciously appropriated such texts in addition to others in attempts to articulate a new particularly *Tibetan* national identity and ideology. Other prominent Treasure Revealers from this period include Padma Ledreltsel (*padma las 'brel rtsal,* 1291-1315?), also known as Tsultrim Dorje (*tshul khrims rdo rje*),[74] Karma Lingpa (*ka rma gling pa,* b. 1450), usually identified as the discoverer of the "Bardo Thödrol" or the Tibetan Book of the

Dead,[75] and Ratna Lingpa (*ratna gling pa*, 1403-1479), principal redactor of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*, among others.

Although Nyingma authors and "visionary editors" such as Ürgyen Lingpa were indeed important and influential figures during the fourteenth century, it is nonetheless true that such figures had very little political influence themselves. During this period we know that the Sakyapas, as well as the Karma (*ka rma*), Drigung (*'bri gung*), and Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) branches of the Kargyü (*bka' brgyud*) School (among others) were extremely active in the pursuit of political power in central Tibet. Followers of the Nyingma School, however, do not seem to be involved at all in these sorts of activities. Why? One hypothesis is that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Nyingmapas were as political active as any other group. Due to the scattered and decentralized nature of Tibetan polities at that time, however, Nyingma influence was probably felt most at a local level, with strongholds of power in particular regions and districts. Such influence was usually affiliated with specific families or clans as much as monastic or other exclusively religious institutions. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, we see the emergence of larger power-bases and political entities and groups with specific religious affiliations jockeying for political power in alliances with powerful families or even foreign powers. Nyingma followers were conspicuous for their absence in these emerging patterns of political activity.

Why were Nyingmapas so uninvolved in the dramatic and momentous political events of the fourteenth century? What was the power-base or political agenda(s) of the Nyingmapas at the time? Can we say that they were largely based in village culture and yogic under-culture, and not with influential families and large urban centers? Was it in fact the case that Nyingma families ended up on the bottom of the socio-political order? We cannot answer these questions adequately and the underlying reasons for the Nyingma situation in the fourteenth century are unclear. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the present study it is sufficient to note that their political capital was clearly in a state of decline. This does not mean, however, that they had become complete non-entities on the Tibetan scene, simply that their once powerful influence had eroded significantly. The Nyingma tradition was almost by definition composed of groups that embraced past status and local traditions. This as opposed to groups and individuals who embraced newer Indic sources and strategies of institutionalization, and so forth, in the formation of their corporate identity. What is of interest here is that the Nyingmapas were not

just eliminated, but in fact provided important narratives used to legitimize the groups emphasizing ideologies of centrality, and so forth. Thus, it might be that Geoffrey Samuel's analysis of the tension between the center and periphery in Tibetan societies is incomplete.

Although we have few literary sources that describe the affairs or status of the Nyingma tradition during this period, we *do* have access to a vast corpus of literature produced by the Nyingmapas themselves. It is the premise of the thesis that religious language and rhetoric can and often does reflect a variety of concerns other than strictly religious ones. Hence, we now turn our attention to these materials, with the idea in mind that the language, images, and symbols employed therein may provide us with some clue as to how they perceived their situation.

In general, the Nyingma tradition was known for two types of striking rhetoric. One that is exemplified by graphic exorcism and subjugation rituals, stark sexual imagery, and so forth, and another that is exemplified by the more aphoristic "natural" language found in Great Perfection literature, particularly that associated with the Mind Series.

The former is well illustrated by texts from the Mahāyoga class such as the cycles relating to the mythical *khyung* bird (Sanskrit: *garuḍa*, discussed at length in chapter five), and, perhaps most significantly, in the *Vajrakīla Tantra*, recently treated at length by Robert Mayer.[76] These texts concern themselves with the grittier side of the spiritual life, freely incorporating discussions of demons, disease, poison, body fluids, ritual, sex and violence. Professor Mayer's summary of the crucial seventh chapter to the *phur pa bcu gnyis* tantra from within *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* gives a good indication of the type of rhetoric being deployed in these texts:

> The narrative begins with the Buddhas noticing that the Śaiva deities were causing terrible harm to the world by their savage attacks against the Buddhist religion. The Buddhas also perceived that the Śaiva deities could never be influenced by peaceful means; hence Vajrakīlaya manifested a special wrathful form with one thousand heads, a thousand arms, and ten billion feet, dwelling in a cemetery palace. From this form in turn was emanated the six-armed, four-legged, three-headed form of Vajrakumāra, the "Excellent Son", embracing Ekajatā. Vajrakumāra trampled the arrogant gods underfoot. He was then invested by Vajrakīlaya with

> the emblems of the Śaiva gods, such as the khatvānga. Then the forms of the Kīlas of the Five Families were emanated, Buddhakīla, and so forth, with their upper bodies similar to Vajrakumāra, and their lower bodies shaped like triangular kīlas. Next, Vighnarāja (Ganesa) with all his retinue were summoned; to the accompaniment of some "vajra verses", the vighnas are killed, and their remainders burned and eaten. Then the interlocuter, now transformed into Karmaheruka, asks how the yogins of future ages should emulate this great deed? Vajrakīlaya replies with some of the root verses of the Vajrakīlaya tradition, verses that are found in Dumbu and repeated in virtually every Vajrakīlaya gter-ma, sādhana, commentary, and so forth. Then the Ten Wrathful Deities (dasakrodha) and consorts and their zoomorphic attendants are emanated. Next, the Śaiva deities are squeezed to a pulp, upon which Ucchusmakrodha is emanated. The latter consumes the mess, and the Śaiva pantheon are revived once more, taking the service-names of Grub-pa Lanka, promising to protect future yogins... Next Vajrakīlaya has sexual intercourse with all the consorts of the Śaiva deities, and from this union, the series of goddesses Gaurī and so forth, Sinhamā and so forth, and Ankusa and so forth, are born. After being used in this way, the Śaiva female deities themselves are bound under oath as servants and consigned to the outside of the maṇḍala.[77]

This summary demonstrates the types of images and language characteristically utilized in the Mahāyoga class of Nyingma literature, including exorcism, burning, smashing, binding, coercive sexual intercourse, zoomorphic henchmen, and so on.

As common and well known as this sort of imagery is in Nyingma literature, it is perhaps better known for the Great Perfection's apophatic "natural" rhetoric. This form of Nyingma rhetoric utilizes strategies of negation, paradox, relaxation, and so forth, to create an approximation of meditative experience or realization. The following passages from Longchenpa's *Trilogy of Comfort and Ease (ngal gso skor gsum)* provide particularly good examples. The first is taken from Longchenpa's discussion of meditation from the second volume:

> [A person of highest intelligence] knows all that is postulated by the intellect to be like an apparition, having no essence whatsoever that could be grasped;
> To be like the one overarching sky, to have nothing to boast of, and to be nothing by themselves;
> And he passes the verdict on them that they are of the sphere where no compulsive addiction obtains.
> Pitfalls and obscurations become the experience of Being;
> Obstacles spur him on toward what is healthy and wholesome, and unfavorable conditions aid him to limpid clearness and consummate perspicacity;
> On the ground that is pure pleasure, his mind (operates) constantly in a state of pleasure,
> And an understanding comes that is like the sky unlimited.[78]

Here negation, analogy, and paradox are utilized to convey the flavor of the Great Perfection perspective. In a similar passage from the third volume of this work, transcendence is emphasized:

> Joys and sorrows, happiness and misery, good and evil
> Are all like a mirage, an open (possibility) without an ontological principle.
> All that is—the world of the within and the without, together with the fictions about it—is like a mirage.
> While there is nothing there is yet a presence and as this has been free from its very beginning in its actuality—
> Understand it as an open (possibility) from the very beginning, having neither center nor periphery.[79]

These sorts of passages are typical of the sort of aphoristic language frequently used in Great Perfection literature. Unlike the raw narrations of bloody conflict and subjugation, the discourse in such passages is affective, counterintuitive, poetic, and above all literary.

Another form of Nyingma literature prevalent at this time was the mythological literature being "discovered" by various "treasure revealers" (*gter ston*) such as Urgyen Lingpa. The mythical portions of early works such as the Maṇi Kabum (*ma ṇi bka' 'bum*) discovered by Nyangrel Nyima Özer (*nyang ral nyi ma 'o zer*, 1124-1192) and others, as well as *The Testimonial*

Record of Padmasambhava (pad ma bka' thang) and *The Five Scrolls (bka' thang sde lnga)* both discovered by Urgyen Lingpa in the fourteenth century, develop a distinctive view of Tibet's history and place in the world.[80] The former purports to contain historical information on the life and deeds of the first Buddhist king of Tibet, Songtsen Gampo, and explicitly identifies him with Tibet's patron bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. This identification had far-reaching ramifications for Tibetan religious and political life, and most likely provided the ideological underpinnings for the divine status accorded the Dalai Lama, as well as Jangchup Gyaltsen's (and later the fifth Dalai Lama's) evocation of an imaginal Tibetan empire to serve his own political ends. The latter two works are narrations of the career of Padmasambhava, and contain some very striking episodes such as that of the "Matricide Rudra," a graphic tale of the battle between good and evil that includes sex, violence, apostasy, and general debauchery. As with the Mahāyoga materials considered above, narratives of this sort appear incongruous with Great Perfection rhetoric that is equally characteristic of Nyingma literature. Ronald Davidson suggests that the narrative character of the myth of Rudra (and other similar episodes) found in these Nyingma materials are based upon social values. He argues that the genre of Nyingma literature, of which this episode is a prime example, was deeply influenced by oral and bardic traditions valued by village culture.[81] Matthew Kapstein has also commented on this narrative by Urgyen Lingpa, proposes that is conveys, among other things, philosophical messages concerning "eternity and temporality, enlightenment and bewilderment, understanding and the rebellion of the will in ignorance."[82] Davidson's and Kapstein's observations suggest interesting possibilities concerning "rhetorical" readings of Nyingma texts. Urgyen Lingpa's texts also contain elements of social/political critique in the form of prophecy, as with the example cited earlier in this chapter in which he states, "the pig will overturn the earth," in a fairly explicit reference to the political overthrow of the Sakya hegemony by the emerging Phakmodrupas (see note). Different groups also utilized these two textual cycles to legitimate their claims to spiritual or political authority.

Thus we see that Nyingma texts from the period cover a range of literary genres, typified by this tense juxtaposition of two remarkably different discourses (i.e., aphoristic and antinomian), both distinctive and controversial. As the name "Nyingma" ("ancient") suggests, the school maintains that it uniquely represents the ancient Buddhism of Tibet, introduced during the dynastic period between the seventh and ninth centuries. As such, adherents of the

school can effectively claim that theirs is the original school of Tibetan Buddhism, and that it was the form of Buddhism most closely associated with the imperial age that other groups are attempting to symbolically evoke. The Nyingma School claims for itself historical priority and doctrinal purity. In contrast to Bön, it identifies itself as a purely Buddhist school, but in harmony with Bön it insists upon the value of autochthonous Tibetan traditions, particularly those connected with the "treasure" revelations.[83] The paradox is that the symbolic force of these writings being produced by members of an effectively marginalized group whose influence has waned significantly since the imperial period is now subject to appropriating by competing groups. Interestingly, as the influx of new textual materials from India and elsewhere is drying up, the "treasure" activity of the Nyingma School is continuing and expanding during this period.

These questions raise another set of questions directly related to the issues of the Great Perfection rhetoric under consideration here. Was the rhetoric of the Great Perfection School, with its antinomian deprecation of hierarchical structures and social norms, indicative of its adherents' social *failure*, or was it a reason? As we have seen, the two primary contributions of the Nyingmas were 1) Great Perfection rhetoric with its striking rejectionism, and 2) the role they played in developing innovative narrative literature. Perhaps Great Perfection followers were forced to employ these terms of mythology and religious traditions precisely because their clans were losing influence in the sociopolitical domain. If it is true that they were unsuccessful in their attempts to influence events in that domain, especially considering the fact of their earlier glory and present plight, were they driven to even higher achievements in one of the few areas in which they still excelled? Followers of the Nyingma School may have seen themselves as the heirs to a tradition with a glorious past that had unfortunately fallen into a period of adversity, and thus found it easy to play the role of cultural critics who in certain cases became cultural ideologues and/or architects. In short, they may have been forced to focus on the discursive realm since they had been largely defeated in the political realm.

CENTER AND PERIPHERY: POLITICAL TERRAINS

BHUTAN

In the preceding discussion, there has been an underlying argument that with the advent of the Modern schools, followers of the Nyingma tradition were being pushed to the margins of Tibetan society, both literally and figuratively. Hence, as the Modern traditions were establishing institutional presences in Central Tibet (which also possessed both centralized and hierarchical organizing structures), Nyingma traditions are flourishing in small local contexts such as villages and families. There is thus an almost explicit connection between the geographical and social centers and margins. If one examines the region of Bhutan in these terms, its status as a satellite on the periphery of geographical and cultural Tibetan becomes clear. Thus, it should not be surprising that the Nyingma School enjoyed particular popularity there. Bhutan's status as a Nyingma stronghold on the perimeter of the Tibetan religious and cultural spheres is also significant when considered in terms of its role in Longchenpa's biography. As we shall see in a future chapter, Longchenpa felt bewildered and persecuted in the environment of Central Tibet, and took refuge in Bhutan for a period of years.

Regarding early Bhutanese history, Michael Aris has stated that, "whereas in the case of early Tibetan history there exists a solid core of evidence in the form of contemporary manuscripts and inscriptions, no such material is ever likely to come to light for the same period in Bhutan."[84] The absence of such materials makes the project of determining what, for example, the political and social climate might have been in fourteenth century Bhutan extremely difficult. In fact, the only known written material of Bhutanese origin that can be dated with certainty before the seventeenth century is the autobiography of the Tertön and purported reincarnation of Longchenpa, Padma Lingpa (1450-1521).[85] The study of the period prior to the seventeenth century must be made relying upon Tibetan texts that deal with events in Bhutan or on Bhutanese texts composed after the seventeenth century that relate to events in the early period.

Concerning Central Bhutan, including the province of Bumthang (site of Longchenpa's period of exile), the following general comments can be made concerning traditional historical beliefs. The region was converted to Buddhism early on by Padmasambhava, and by the end

of the ninth century was ruled by descendents of religious and aristocratic families. This arrangement probably persisted into the eleventh century at which time new families of prestigious religious descent displaced the older clan-based order. In Bumthang in particular, the line of hereditary chiefs known as the Chökor Pönpo (*chos 'khor dpon po*) supplanted the ruling Dung (*gdung*) clan.[86]

The relationship between "Proto-Bhutan" and central Tibet during this period was somewhat paradoxical, as the design and placement of several of the original Buddhist temples in Bumthang suggests. For example, the two ancient and prominent temples of sKyer-chu and Byams-pa, the only temples dating from the Tibetan dynastic period still surviving south of the Himalayan range, illustrate this point well. For, as Aris puts it, "while the temples stand as direct proof of their link to a golden age of spiritual vigour, at the same time the supposed purpose of these 'taming' constructions places them beyond the pale of that primal source of legitimacy, on the outer barbarian fringes."[87] The Bhutanese sense of themselves as participating in the religious and cultural life of the Tibetan region is mitigated, perhaps subconsciously, by the knowledge that they dwell at the margins of this civilization. Further supporting this sense of cultural inferiority are a series of quasi-historical or mythological accounts of "expulsion and recovery" of royal family members or other heroes held in high regard by the Bhutanese people.[88]

There appears to be ambivalence on the part of the Bhutanese expressed in their inclination to identify themselves with the high culture and aristocracy of Tibet on the one hand, and the tendency to view it as hegemonic and threatening on the other. A similar ambivalence is expressed in the Tibetan tendency to view Bhutanese culture as an manifestation of its own on the one hand, and to view the Bhutanese as barbaric and their culture as a debased form of their own on the other. This ambivalence is illustrated in Longchenpa's *Praise to Bumthang*, in which he states:

> [In fact], this land [of Bumthang] resembles the Tibetan province of Ü—
> In the Autumn it is neither too cool nor too warm.
> Since the lineage of Tibetan religious kings and
> Pure Tibetans reside there, it is especially exalted.[89]

Longchenpa has been forced to flee the corruption and strife of Central Tibet to seek refuge in the "lovely" hidden land of Bhutan, but ultimately the best thing about this pristine place is its resemblance to the very place he has fled, as well as the presence of high born Tibetans.

This tension between the center and the margins that we have seen in the case of the treasure literature, for instance, becomes a source for powerful rhetorical activity. For, just as rival institutional groups such as the Phakmodrupas are utilizing the rhetoric of their marginalized competitors in order to bolster their claims to political and religious authority, Longchenpa is also utilizing the appeal of the margins in his bid to influence events in the center of the Tibetan religious and cultural world, i.e., Central Tibet.

This appears to be related to pervasive Tibetan notion of a quasi-mandalic imperial model of the central and border geographical areas discussed by Michael Aris.[90] According to this scheme, a temple is constructed at a central or particularly sacred site, which then becomes the center of what is usually a hierarchically organized mapping of geographical and political domains. The classic example of this hierarchical "mapping" process is drawn from the famous apocryphal work, the *ma ni bka' 'bum*, in which the king Songtsen Gampo (*srong btsan sgam po*, c. 618-649) subjugates a demoness by building a central temple (the famous Jokhang in Lhasa), with a series of satellite temples surrounding its periphery in order to tame the border regions and beyond.[91] Thus we find the central region of Tibet surrounded by increasing degrees of barbarism.

Although the agenda of this example is certainly one of trans-regional integration and hegemonic centralization, there are other examples, such as the Kyerchu (*skyer chu*) and Champa (*byams pa*) temples in Bhutan, that embrace a more fluid, multi-centered model. These two temples were clearly patterned on the former model, and date from the dynastic period, and hence serve similar functions albeit on a local level. However, since they themselves reside on the perimeter of the central Tibetan political domain, they must by definition remain marginal to Tibetan power structures. Moreover, the mere fact that there are two such temples in relative proximity creates a situation where there are multiple nodes of power, thus neutralizing to some extent the character of centralization. Aris points out the paradox of this arrangement:

> While the temples stand as direct proof of their links to a golden age of spiritual vigour, at the same time the supposed purpose of these 'taming' constructions places them almost beyond the pale of that primal source of legitimacy, on the outer barbarian fringes.[92]

Surely Longchenpa was aware of this very tension as he wrote of his longing for his homeland of central Tibet in one line, and extolled the bucolic virtues of barbarous Bhutan in the next.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate the rich mosaic of Tibetan history from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. Starting from the relative stability of the dynastic period, things fall apart after the assassination of Lang Darma. During the so-called "dark ages" of Tibetan civilization, Buddhism and Buddhist culture are maintained and nurtured in small local contexts, usually by lay lineages of ritual specialists, while monastic traditions all but disappear. Starting in the tenth century, there is a revitalization of institutional Buddhism and Tibetan culture, initiated largely by the reform movements based in western Tibet. This new phase was accompanied by a huge influx of new textual materials from India, the free movement of scholars between India and Tibet, the founding of various "modern" schools of Buddhism, the rise of large-scale monastic institutions, and so forth. These developments also gave rise to vigorous and innovative indigenous religious movements and literature composed in response to the onslaught of external ideas and influences. This is the genesis for much of the most influential Great Perfection literature. Hence, the time following the second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet (*phyi dar*) was characterized by an extremely rich and diverse collection of events and trends. Various movements toward political and ideological unification did occur in the intervening years, most notably that overseen by the Sakya hegemony in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was not until the fourteenth century, however, with the advent of Jangchup Gyaltsen and the consolidation of religious and political institutions, that the multiplicity and diversity of the preceding centuries finally becomes somewhat unified. Mirroring this "rage for unity" were the distinctive literary achievements of the Nyingma School, which articulated an alternative form of unity—a pervasive unity beyond the reach of the new hierarchical power structures on whose margins their tradition stood. Nyingma

literature in general, and Great Perfection literature in particular, takes the disparate threads of discouse from the preceding centuries, and weaves them into a coherent vision of unity with far-reaching social, political, and spiritual ramifications, as we shall see in the final chapters of this thesis.

---

1 For English language biographies of these important figures, see, for example, Robert Thurman, *The Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1982); D.S. Ruegg, *The Life of Bu ston Rinpoche with the Tibetan Text of the Bu ston Rnam thar* (Roma: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966); Cyrus Stearns, *The Buddha from Dolpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999).

2 Samten Karmay mentions that Lhalung Pelgyi Dorje's name appears as the ninth name in a series of religious masters in Samye monastery beginning with dBa Ye-shes dbang-po, the first abbot. He thus concludes that it was the ninth abbot of Samye that murdered Lang Darma. Although later historians attempt to paint Lang Darma as totally anti-Buddhist, Buddhism was flourishing during his reign. Rather, Lang Darma attempted to dismantle the established monastic system that had become a social and financial burden to the State. Since such a policy would naturally distress the abbot of Samye, whose authority depended on the State, it is plausible that he would wish to destroy the king once and for all. See Samten Karmay, *The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching in Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), pp. 9, 77-78.

3 Traditional Tibetan historiographers have reported that after the death of Lang Darma, the succession was contested on behalf of two infant princes, one adopted by the elder queen (Yumten), and the other born posthumously but legitimately to the younger queen (Ö Sung). Hugh Richardson, however, suggests that Yumten never exited and was a fiction fabricated to conceal the fact that there was no legitimate claimant to the throne and that Ö Sung was not a descendent of the royal line after all. See Hugh Richardson, "Who was Yum-brtan" and "The Succession to Glang-dar-ma" in *High Peaks, Pure Earth: Collected Writings on Tibetan History and Culture* (London: Serindia Pulications, 1998), pp. 48-55, 106-113.

4 See Roberto Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang According to mNga'.ris rgyal.rabs and Gu.ge mkhan.chen Ngag.dbang grags.pa* (Dharamsala, India: Tho.ling gtsug.lag.khang lo.gcig. stong 'khor.ba'i rjes.dran.mdzad sgo'i go.sgrig tshogs.chung, 1996), pp. 546-547. The contemporary Tibetan history, the *Deb ther kun gsal me long* edited by Phun-tshogs tshe-ring,

suggests that the first uprising took place in 846, but these dates appear problematic. See Phun-tshogs tse-ring, ed., *Deb ther kun gsal me long* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1987), pp. 135-136.

[5] Phun-tshogs tse-ring, ed., *Deb ther kun gsal me long*, p. 134.

[6] Dalai Lama V, *A History of Tibet*, Z. Ahmad, trans. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 78. See also G. Tucci, *Religions of Tibet*, G. Samuel, trans., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 250.

[7] Phun-tshogs tse-ring, ed., *Deb ther kun gsal me long*, p. 134.

[8] Phun-tsogs tshe-ring, *Deb ther kun gsal me long*, p. 134.

[9] See Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1993), pp. 457-458. Tucci gives the possible dates for Gongpa Rabsel as being either 832-915 or 892-975. See G. Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 250.

[10] See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 9-10. Karmay specifically identifies the ritual and meditative systems as arising from Mahāyoga tantras such as the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, and so forth, as flourishing during this period.

[11] See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 10-12.

[12] See Hugh Richardson, "Succession to Glang-dar-ma," p. 113; Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 8.

[13] See Vitali, The Kingdoms of Gu-ge and Pu.hrang, p. 555.

[14] See Samten Karmay, "The Ordinance of Lha Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od," in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson: Proceedings of the IATS, Oxford 1979* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1980), pp. 150-161.

[15] See Karmay, *The Great Perfection:*, p. 10

[16] Karmay, however, suggests that their teachings were the survivors of teachings that had flourished only *after* the assassination of Lang Darma. See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 13.

[17] Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, p. 458.

[18] See, for example, Lobsang Lhalungpa, trans., *The Life of Milarepa* (New York: Dutton, 1979).

[19] See Warren W. Smith, Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), p. 82.

[20] See Dung-dkar blo-bzang 'phrin-las, *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991), p. 48 *et passim*.

[21] See Luc Kwanten, "Tibetan-Mongol Relations During the Yuan Dynasty, 1207-1368" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1972), p. 30.

[22] Warren W. Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, p. 82.

[23] Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949), p. 7.

[24] See G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 8.

[25] See Warren W. Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, p. 83, and G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 9.

[26] Luciano Petech, "Tibetan Relations with Sung China and with the Mongols" in *China Among Equals*, Morris Rossabi, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 181.

[27] See Guiseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 9. Luciano Petech, however, suggests that Sa-paṇ had *not* been selected by the Tibetans to represent them. See Luciano Petech, "Tibetan Relations," p. 181.

[28] Warren W. Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, p. 85.

[29] Turrell V. Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (1977), 122.

[30] Cite Recent article by D.S. Ruegg on this in one of the Proceedings of the IATS volumes.

[31] Warren Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, p. 90.

[32] G. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, p. 15.

[33] G. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, p. 16.

[34] G. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, p. 17.

[35] See David Jackson, "The *bsTan rim* ("Stages of the Doctrine") and Similar Graded Expositions of the Bodhisattva Path" in *Tibetan Literature*, pp. 229-243.

[36] See Joe B. Wilson, "Tibetan Commentaries on Indian */astras*" in *Tibetan Literature*, pp. 125-137.

[37] See Janet B. Gyatso, "Drawn from the Tibetan Treasury: The *gTer ma* Literature" in *Tibetan Literature*, pp. 147-169.

[38] See Georges Dreyfus, "Proto-Nationalism in Tibet" in Per Kvaerne, ed., *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies* (Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994): 205-218. Dreyfus uses the term "proto-nationalism" to distinguish the "nationalist" movements and events of this period from those based upon the modern understanding of a nation/state.

[39] See Luciano Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols: The Yüan-Sa-skya Period of Tibetan History* (Roma: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990), p. 88.

[40] See Petech, Central Tibet and the Mongols, p. 89.

[41] See Leonard van der Kuijp, "On the Life and Political Career of Ta'i-Si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302-?1364)" in *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Géza on his Seventieth Birthday* (Vienna: Arbeitkreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1991), 279-280. See also W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 74.

[42] See Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols*, p. 91; van der Kuijp, "Life and Political Career," 286. Van der Kuijp points out that even if Jangchup Gyaltsen were a monk, his status was never that of a religious leader/political leader (*bla dpon*).

[43] See Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols*, pp. 98.

[44] See Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols*, p. 99.

[45] See Dung-dkar blo-bzang 'phrin-las, *The Merging of Religious and Secular in Tibet*, pp. 53-54.

[46] See Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols*, p. 106.

[47] See van der Kuijp, "On the Life and Political Career," p. 294n.

[48] See Eliot Sperling, "Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung-pa *Sgom-pa*" in Christopher Beckwith, ed., *Silver on Lapis: Tibetan Literary Culture and History* (Bloomington: The Tibet Society, 1987), p. 38.

[49] Leonard van der Kuijp, in a personal communication, has expressed doubt that there ever *was* a Neudong legal code. He feels it was likely a fabrication after the fact by the fifth Dalai Lama. Most standard Tibetan histories (often based on the fifth Dalai Lama's history, as it happens), suggest that Jangchup Gyaltsen's institution of the legal codes took place shortly after his rise to power in the mid-1350s.

[50] These fifteen laws were the following: (1) the law of the heroic tiger (*dpa' bo stag gi zhal lce*), (2) law of the cowardly fox (*sdar ma wa yi zha lce*), (3) the law relating to top officials (*sne mo las 'dzin gyi zhal lce*), (4) the law of distinguising truth from falsehood when listening to appeals (*zhu bzhes bden rdzun gyi zhal lce*), (5) the law relating to the arrest, binding, and imprisoning of criminals (*bzung bkyig khrims ra'i zhal lce*), (6) the law relating to extracting a confession by means of torture (*nag can khrag bcor gyi zhal lce*), (7) the law relating to fines (*dran 'dzin chad las kyi zhal lce*), (8) the law concerning taxation (*hor 'dra za rkang gi zhal lce*), (9) the law relating to the compensation for murder (*bsad pa stong gi zhal lce*), (10) the law relating to compensation for injury (*rmas pa krag gi zhal lce*), (11) the law relating to trial by ordeal (*smyon ham mna' dag gi zhal lce*), (12) the law relating to compensation for theft (*brkus pa 'jal gyi zhal lce*), (13) the law relating to settlement of family disputes (*nye 'brel 'bral bzlums kyi zhal lce*), (14) the law relating to compensation for rape (*byis byas byi rin gyi zhal lce*), and

(15) the law concerning borrowing and lending of money (*nam bar tshur gy zhal lce*). See Dalai Lama V, *History of Tibet*, pp. 141-142; Dung-dkar blo-bzang 'phrin-las, *Merging of Religious and Secular*, p. 54; Phun-tshogs tshe-ring, *deb ther kun gsal me long*, p. 213. Shakabpa mentions thirteen rather than fifteen laws. See Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, p. 82.

[51] See D.S. Ruegg, *The Life of Bu ston Rin po che*, p. 8.

[52] See Georges Dreyfus, "Proto-Nationalism in Tibet," p. 207.

[53] This prophesy contained the cryptic statement: "The pig will uproot the soil" (*phag gis sa glog*), which was interpreted to mean that Jangchup Gyaltsen and the Phakmodrupas (the word "*phag*" means "pig") will politically overthrow ("uproot") the Sakyapas ("*sa*" means "soil"). See Urgyen Lingpa, *Padma bka' thang* (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, n.d.), p. 569.

[54] Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen, *rlangs po ti bse ru* (Lhasa: 1989?); *ta si byang chub rgyal mtshan gyi bka' chems mthong ba don ldon* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1989).

[55] See Per Sørensen, trans., *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: Tibetan Buddhist Historiography: An Annotated Translation of the XIVth Century Tibetan Chronicle: rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 1994).

[56] See Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, p. 457.

[57] See Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, p. 460.

[58] See Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, p. 473.

[59] See Donald Lopez, "Polemical Literature (*dGag lan*)," in Cabezón and Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature*, pp. 217-228.

[60] *dgung lo brgyad par gsang sngags rnying ma'i chos skor ma lus pa zhus shing bzlas brjod dang/ sgom sgrub sogs la thugs brtson chen po mdzad/*. Koshul Drakpa Jungnay (*ko zhul grags pa 'byung gnas*) and Gyalwa Lozang Khedrup (*rgyal ba blo bzang mkhas grub*), *Tibetan Biographical Dictionary* (*gangs can mkhas grub rim byon ming mdzod* (Gansu: Kan su'i mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1992), p. 1084.

[61] See Koshul Drakpa Jungnay and Gyalwa Lozang Khedrup, *Tibetan Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 656-658.

[62] See Koshul Drakpa Jungnay and Gyalwa Lozang Khedrup, *Tibetan Biographical Dictionary* pp. 835-837.

[63] Check Tulku Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet: An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism* (Boston: Wisdom, 1986).

[64] See Franz Michael, *Rule by Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and its Role in Society and State,* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1982).

[65] See D.S. Ruegg, *The Life of Bu ston Rin po che,* pp. 19-20.

[66] For a discussion of Jangchup Gyaltsen's sponsorship of this canon, see Leonard van der Kuijp, "Fourteenth Century Cultural History 1: Ta'i-si-tu Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan as a Man of Religion," *Indo-Iranian Journal* (Vol. 37, No. 2, April 1994): 139-149.

[67] Budön, cited in George Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals,* p. 102n. Check *bu ston chos 'byung* (Sichuan: Krung go bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1988).

[68] Sakya Paṇḍita, cited in G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls,* p. 109.

[69] See Per Kvaerne, "The Literature of Bon," in *Tibetan Literature,* p. 138. For a more detailed discussion please see Per Kvaerne, "The Canon of the Tibetan Bonpos," in *Indo-Iranian Journal* 16: 18-56 (1974).

[70] See Kvaerne, "The Literature of Bon," p. 139.

[71] See Kvaerne, "The Literature of Bon," p. 140. See also, Kvaerne, "Canon of the Tibetan Bonpos," pp. 38-39.

[72] See David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (Boulder: Prajñā Press, 1980), p. 139.

[73] See Snellgrove and Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet,* p. 160.

[74] Padma Ledreltsel's dates are not at all clear. Gyurme and Kapstein give 1248 as his birth date, while the recent *Masters of the Nyingma Lineage* volume published by Dharma Publishing cites either 1231 or 1291 as the date of his birth. A forthcoming article by David Germano and Janet B. Gyatso suggest that his dates are 1291-1315/17. The difficulty in setting the dates for this important figure are all the more significant since Longchenpa, born in 1308, claimed to be the reincarnation of Padma Ledreltsel, who, according to the dates put forward by Germano and Gyatso, had not yet passed away at the time of Longchenpa's birth. See the following chapter for further discussion.

[75] For more on Karma Lingpa, see Bryan J. Cuevas, "The hidden treasures of Sgam-po-gdar Mountain: a history of the Zhi-khro revelations of Karma-gling-pa and the making of the Tibetan Book of the Dead" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Virginia, 2000).

[76] See Robert Mayer, *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis* (Oxford: Kiscadale Publications, 1996).

[77] See Robert Mayer, *Phur-pa bcu-gnyis,* pp. 169-170.

---

[78] Longchenpa, *ngal gso skor gsum*, cited in Herbert Guenther, trans., *Kindly Bent to Ease Us Vol. 2* (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1976), p. 79.

[79] Longchenpa, *ngal gso skor gsum*, cited in Herbert Guenther, trans., *Kindly Bent to Ease Us Vol. 3* (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1976), p. 73.

[80] See Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 147.

[81] Ronald Davidson, "Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa-skya-pa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka," in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 14:2 (1991): 223. (197-235).

[82] See Matthew Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, p. 177.

[83] See Matthew Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, p. 163.

[84] Michael Aris, *Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom* (Warminster, UK: Aris and Phillips, 1979), p. xxvii.

[85] Michael Aris, *Bhutan*, p. xxvii. Padma Lingpa, *Bum thang gter ston padma gling pa'i rnam thar 'od zer kun mdzes nor bu'i phreng ba* in *The Rediscovered Teachings of the Great Padma gLing pa Vol. 14* (Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgay, 1976).

[86] See Françoise Pommeret, "The Birth of a Nation," in *Bhutan: Moutain Fortress of the Gods*, Christian Schicklgruber and Françoise Pommeret eds. (London: Serindia Publications), p. 187. See also, Michael Aris, *Bhutan*, p. 118.

[87] Michael Aris, *Bhutan*, p. 33.

[88] Michael Aris suggests that, although the elements of these narratives range from historical to legendary or mythological, they still stand for a traditional audience as accounts of "what actually happened." Furthermore, since a peoples' historical consciousness helps to determine its view of itself, it also serves as an important factor in its relation to truly historical events. See Michael Aris, *Bhutan*, p. 70.

[89] Longchenpa, *bum thang lha'i sbas yul gyi bkod pa me tog skyed tshal*, in *Miscellaneous Writings of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1973) 243.4-244.1.

[90] Michael Aris, *Bhutan*, p. 12, et seq.

[91] Michael Aris, *Bhutan*, p. 15.

[92] Michael Aris, *Bhutan*, p. 33.

CHAPTER FOUR: LONGCHENPA'S BIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

To understand the impact of a life and historical circumstances on a book, obviously it is as essential to understand the details of the life in question as it is to understand the details of the book in question. Thus the question of the relationship of a book and a life itself entails a questioning of the book *and* the life; a treatment of "rhetoric" in books, must be equally mirrored with a treatment of how we tell the tale of a life. In addition to the bare details of an author's life, one needs to look for recurring patterns of attitudes and inclinations such as paranoia, romanticism, idealism, and so forth, as well as patterns for how his or her life's circumstances and agendas play themselves out in their lives. Because these events, inclinations, and patterns are so intimately connected with, and can yield such stimulating and unusual insights into, a work of literature, the present chapter turns to the biographical literature and details of the author of our book, the great Tibetan saint Longchen Rabjampa.

BIOGRAPHY/AUTOBIOGRAPHY/HAGIOGRAPHY

First, I will attempt to show whether or to what extent one may use biographical materials relating to an author to gain insight into his or her texts. In brief, biographical criticism, or psychoanalytical criticism, is a mode of textual analysis that takes an author's biography to be preeminent among those that cause or condition the production or reception of literary works. The practice of biographical or psychoanalytic criticism is highly disputed. At any rate, it is often rightly criticized for being used as too reductive a methodology. That having been said, however, it seems foolish and even irresponsible to ignore materials of this sort, particularly when they have direct bearing on the events surrounding the composition of a specific work of literature. The present section will try to address some of these concerns and to argue for the legitimate place of biographical criticism in the interpretation of texts ostensibly concerned exclusively with philosophical matters.

The project of employing biographical materials in the interpretation of texts would seem, on the face of it, to be relatively uncontroversial. Indeed, one might wonder, how could the life of an author *not* be related to the contents of his/her writings? Problems arise, however, when

we begin to delve more deeply into the problems of authorship I alluded to in Chapter Two, in which the "author" is viewed as a social construct arising out of the particular historical circumstances, and as an interpretive strategy used to impose coherence and uniformity on a literary work or body of works. Not only is the role of the "author" of any given biography thrown into question, the status as "author" of the particular individual about whom these biographies were written becomes more difficult as well. That is to say, the purported events of a figure's life always stand two steps removed from our immediate comprehension, mediated by not one, but two distinct authorial figures.

These are thorny problems even in the context of modern biographical criticism, but in the context of Tibetan biographical writings they become almost intractable, since the figures in question are almost always attributed divine or superhuman powers. Non-hagiographical Tibetan biography or autobiography can hardly be said to have existed prior to the twentieth century. In fact, the two terms most frequently used in Tibetan to refer to writings in the biographical genre are *rnam thar* (short for *rnam par thar pa, vimukti*) and *rtogs brjod* (Sanskrit: *avadāna*), both of which are fraught with religious implications. The term *rnam thar*, for instance is probably best translated as "complete liberation" and almost always refers to the story of a particular saint's spiritual liberation in this context, whereas *rtogs brjod* means "expression of realizations," and is usually a litany of the spiritual exploits of a given religious figure. Thus these terms, as Janet Gyatso puts it, indicate "the overarchingly Buddhist characteristic of the Tibetan life story, liberation being, at least ideally, the Buddhist purpose of life."[1] Thus, practically speaking there are few biographies of persons who are anything less than spiritually awakened or semi-divine, and hence it becomes nearly impossible to attribute to them mundane human emotions or motivations, i.e., the very things that make biographies interesting and useful. Because, even as the practice of deifying the person glorifies and reveres their memory, it effectively effaces their individual idiosyncratic characteristics, and all but renders them spiritual ciphers.

Tibetan hagiographies address only certain aspects of their subjects' lives. They focus typically on visions, yogic attainments, and memories of past lives. Furthermore, the overtly religious nature of these biographies is at odds with the tendency of modern readers and authors to evaluate biographies in terms of their alleged "objectivity." A hagiography is, by definition, a pious narration of the life of a saint or venerated person. As such, it cannot

necessarily be expected to conform to secular conventions and norms, much less so-called empirical standards. Religious biography necessarily takes as a given certain forces and factors for which worldly discourse cannot account. What is more, as with any authors, it is entirely reasonable to assume that authors of such works have a specific ideological agenda and are self-consciously emphasizing certain points and omitting others in order to further their cause; this aspect of Tibetan biographical writing should also be understood in terms of its agenda, i.e., to glorify the spiritual accomplishments of the master and his or her lineage over against those of rival factions.[2] In Tibetan biographies and autobiographies, the reader always understands, explicitly or implicitly, that the protagonist attained "complete liberation" (*rnam thar*), and that the story is meant to provide a model for others in their own quest for spiritual development.

In Tibet, biography and autobiography often overlap in practice as well. What is called biography often turns out to have been dictated by the subject to a scribe, and even if the biography was composed centuries after the death of the subject, it will commonly appropriate large passages verbatim from the earlier works and oral traditions. These common literary practices in Tibet only further complicate our attempts to really "get at" the author's feelings and motivations.

All of these same tensions and problems apply equally to the biographical materials concerned with the life of Longchenpa as well. All versions of Longchenpa's biography that I am aware of devote a certain amount of time to establishing his spiritual credentials, and as such remain somewhat suspect in their reporting of specific events. Moreover, at least one of the biographical sources availbale to us was most likely written or dictated by Longchenpa himself, a fact that presents a new set of interpretive challenges.

This tendency to cast certain events in the foreground, relegating other events to the background, offering partisan and self-interested interpretations of these events in rhetorical attempts to form and influence opinion problematizes naive readings of these biographical materials. Of course, it is not a particularly startling insight to point out that authors and biographers usually have some sort of agenda underlying their presentation, but certainly the additional weight of trying to virtually deify a human being further compounds the difficulties in sifting out reliable "historical" information. Thus, explicitly religious biographies—hagiographies—present interpretive challenges peculiar to their genre.

BIOGRAPHY AS HISTORY

One might argue that it is justifiable to use chronological proximity as a criterion of validity in assessing the usefulness of various accounts of a given author's life privileging texts dating from their subject's lifetime, since there would appear to be a greater likelihood that such texts present an accurate account of events from their own period. Indeed, it seems fair to conclude that the basic sequence of events reported, at least in their most basic form, in fact occurred, and that the interpretations offered were current in the early community of followers. This position has certain problems, however, since it may well be that such contemporaneous accounts also have specific agendas such as the formation or consolidation of a community of believers, and these agendas might mitigate the literal accuracy of the claims made in the text. Such difficulties are often exaggerated in relatively later works of hagiography. Later works have the pronounced tendency to elaborate on the inherent mythic themes, and often seek to privilege the discourse of whatever school they represent through rhetorical strategies such as associating the principal figure with other figures whose prestige is universally acknowledged. Indeed, in certain cases the actual life-narrative becomes overshadowed by the scriptural rationalizations for the interpretations being proffered in the text.

A key problem in any attempt to read "biographical" literature across cultures as a valid source for historical information is the fact that these works are as much works of imaginative literature as they are factual reports of persons and events. Another significant problem is the fact that we as readers come to biographical texts with significantly different expectations as to what constitutes such a text. For Tibetans, there is no contradiction in including seemingly fantasic and magical occurences in what may otherwise be a fairly straightforward account of a man or woman's life. There is the temptation on the part of certain Western readers to either entirely discount the magical component of these narratives, or, on the other hand, to uncritically appropriate the worldview out of which these texts emerged. Either of these approaches is wanting in important ways, and it is necessary to find a balance between these two extremes. These texts *can* provide valuable historical information about the period in question and the figures they purport to document. On the other hand, the literary and imaginative character of these texts themselves constitutes an important literary document regardless of its literal accuracy, as well as shedding light on the authors and period in which it was authored.

Steven Collins, following the lead of J. LeGoff, points out in a recent book the usefulness of literary and artistic works to the historian of the "imaginaire." According to LeGoff, such works "were not produced to serve as historical documents, but are a historical reality unto themselves."[3] Collins goes on to describe the difficulties of differentiating between the "inside" and "outside" of a text—i.e., between a text and that which it purports to describe. He states that this is a particular problem in the area of historigraphy, "where both gaining access to and describing the realities of the past are densely textualized activities."[4] On top of this generally though often overlooked problematic nature of biographies, the hagiographical character of the majority of Tibetan biographical literature introduces variables not usually present in contemporary Western biographies.

EXTANT BIOGRAPHIES OF LONGCHENPA AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

Unfortunately, materials for the study of Longchenpa's life are limited, and the following is an exhaustive list of textual sources with which I am familiar. The texts listed below range in date from Longchenpa's lifetime or shortly thereafter up until the twentieth century. Most of the texts would have to be included under the heading of the literary genre of biography, although there are some notable exceptions. For instance, I have relied to an extent on Longchenpa's quasi-autobiographical writings that take the form of didactic narratives as legitimate sources for biographical information. Similarly, there are certain letters and polemical treatises that refer to specific events in his life and that can be dated accurately, and I have utilized these as well. I present these materials merely as a means for demonstrating the various limitations and horizons afforded by these accounts in our attempts to get a sense of Longchenpa's life and work.

1. *Meaningful to Behold: The Spiritual Biography of the Omniscient Drimay Özer (kun mkhyen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam thar mthong ba don ldan).* This text by Chödrak Zangpo (*Chos grags bzang po*, ca. 14th century), a personal disciple of Lonchenpa, is probably the primary source for his biographical information, both in terms of its antiquity and availability.[5] The text is presently extant in two versions—one located in the *Bima snying thig Vol. 4* in approximately 91 folio sides, and the other reproduced in a recent Western-style edition published in the People's Republic of China (PRC).[6]

2. *Entrance of the Three Faiths: A Spiritual Biography of Longchen Rabjampa (klong chen rab 'byams kyi rnam thar dad pa gsum gyi 'jug ngogs)*. The same PRC publication includes a rather lengthy version (166 pages) of Longchenpa's biography entitled *Entrance of the Three Faiths (dad pa gsum gyi 'jug ngogs)* by the author Lakla Sonam Chödrup (*gLag bla bsod nams chos 'grub*, ca. late nineteenth century).[7] To my knowledge this is the most detailed version of Longchenpa's biography extant, although it does not appear to offer any material not already found in the earlier works.[8] The additional material included in this work is primarily concerned with documenting various scriptual prophesies about Longchenpa. Hence, this work appears to be more self-consciously hagiographical than the older works I have consulted, at least to the extent that its agenda is a transparent attempt to establish Longchenpa's extraordinary spiritual credentials. The text is organized into 11 chapters concerned with (1) prophecies about Longchenpa's life, (2) family history, (3) early education, (4) later studies and religious practices, (5) fortuitous encounters with important religious figures, (6) periods of intensive practice in retreats, (7) prophetic visions of various lamas and deities, (8) the special transmission of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs*, (9) the composition of important texts, (10) his compassionate deeds, and (11) his passing away.
3. *The Amazing Celebration of Supreme Good Fortune: A Brief Elaboration on the Spiritual Biography of the Omniscient Religious King and Great Treasure-Revealer Drimay Özer (kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po gter chen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam thar cung zad spros pa ngo mtshar skal bzang mchog gi dga' ston)*. This medium length work (66 folio sides) by the fifth Lhalung Thugsay Tulku (*Lha lung thugs sras sprul sku*) of Bhutan is a valuable source dating to 1725.[9] This work also contains a brief biography of the controversial Bhutanese saint Padma Lingpa (*Pad ma gling pa*, 1450-1521). The edition of this (text made available through the PL 480 program) is an exact copy of a xylograph from the Tharpa Ling (*thar pa gling*) monastery founded by Longchenpa in the Bumthang region of Bhutan.
4. *The Autobiography of Padma Lingpa*. The sixteenth century Bhutanese Treasure-Revealer Padma Lingpa (*pad ma gling pa*, 1450-1521) claimed to be an incarnation of Longchenpa, and hence both his biographical and autobiographical texts contain significant materials pertaining to the latter's life.[10] Padma Lingpa spends some time recounting the narratives of his "previous" incarnations, the most prominent of whom is probably Longchenpa himself. His detailed discussion of his lives prior to his birth as Longchenpa may thus be construed

as a discussion of Longchenpa's former lives as well. Although these accounts cannot be taken simply as literal historical truth, they are a valuable source of information and lore concerning Longchenpa and his activities in Bhutan in particular. The remarks specifically pertaining to Longchenpa's biography comprise about 16 folio sides. Other accounts of Longchenpa's stay in Bhutan may be found in contemporary Bhutanese Religious Histories such as Geshe Gendun Rinchen's (*brag phug dge bshes dge 'dun rin chen*, b. 1926) *Religious History of Bhutan*.[11]

5. *The Ornament Pervading the Entire World: A Narrative Account of the Precious Collected Early Translation Tantras (snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gling tha gru khyab pa'i rgyan)*. The famous Treasure-Revealer (*gter ston*) Jigmay Lingpa (*'Jigs med gling pa rang byung rdo rje*, 1729/30-1798) also included a significant (28 folio sides) biographical sketch of Longchenpa in his account of the history of the Collected Tantras of the Early Translation tradition, found in his collected works.[12] Jigme Lingpa's material is of particular interest since it is still a relatively early account, and because he seems to have self-consciously appropriated dimensions of Longchenpa's biography in the service of his own religious agenda.
6. Other substantial sources for a biographical study include the accounts found in the *Religious History of Guru Tashi (gu bkra chos 'byung)* and Dudjom Rinpoche's *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, although the latter seems borrowed almost verbatim from the former.[13] The former obviously draws on earlier works, but appears to be more original than Dudjom Rinpoche's treatment. These two sources are widely cited in contemporary scholarship, and are probably the most popular versions among modern Tibetans.
7. In addition to these more complete narrative treatments of Longchenpa's life, other more fragmentary and often derivative materials are also available. For instance, Go Lotsawa's (*'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal*, 1392-1481) *Blue Annals* (*deb ther sngon po*) contains a relatively early account of some pivotal events in Longchenpa's life story, particularly concerning his relationship with Ta'i Situ Jangchub Gyaltsen.[14]
8. Other helpful sources include purportedly autobiographical remarks attributed to Longchenpa at the end of the *Narrative Account of the Quintessence of the Guru (bla ma yang thig lo rgyus)*, and partially auto-biographical accounts found in the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākiṇīs* literature.[15] These sources provide interesting insights into the murky world of

Longchenpa's visionary life and meditative experiences, and possibly his own perception of them.

9. Finally, several lesser-known texts of Longchenpa bear upon issues of his life and deeds. Notable examples of such works include a series of animal fables found in his lesser miscellaneous writings, letters written to eminent lamas of the day, verses of praise for regions of Bhutan, and so forth.[16] These materials, while not explicitly biographical in nature, provide interesting and valuable glimpses into the details of Longchenpa's life, as well into his own interpretation of the events that shaped his life.

The larger works mentioned above all convey the same general picture of Longchenpa's life, and follow roughly similar outlines. Starting from a discussion of his genealogical background, these narratives continue with a discussion of the way in which he was guided and cared for by the goddess Remāti from a very early age. The subsequent sections usually deal with his curriculum of studies, including the manner in which he received teachings from spiritual preceptors, entered the monastic life, and studied the abstruse topics associated with both Sūtra and Tantra in his teens and twenties. Following this period of intense education, in his late twenties and thirties he entered a period of intensive meditative practice, during which time he spent significant amounts of time either in retreat or wandering from place to place. As a result of the extended periods of meditation and other spiritual practices, Longchenpa is said to have had several visions of deities and deceased lamas, from whom he received teachings and prophesies concerning his future career as a teacher. Next, Longchenpa moved into a period of visions and intensive teaching. It was during this phase of his life that he is said to have "received" or "discovered" the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākiṇīs* cycle and began to teach it in earnest to appropriate candidates. The next phase of Longchenpa's life (i.e., his forties and fifties) is characterized as being the period in which he engaged in writing the majority of his important texts. He wrote on a variety of topics ranging from grammar, poetry, and the other minor sciences on the one hand, to abstruse and systematic treatises on tantric philosophy on the other. Finally, these narratives conclude with accounts of the miraculous events surrounding his passing.

TEMPORAL OVERVIEW OF LONGCHENPA'S LIFE

I will now provide a detailed consideration of Longchenpa's life and works on the basis of the literary materials outlined above.

SPIRITUAL ANTECEDENTS

Most accounts of Longchenpa's life begin with a brief discussion of his lineage and forebears, both spiritual and familial. Given the fact that almost all Tibetan biographies possess a strong hagiographical orientation, it is no surprise that much time is spent establishing the spiritual provenance of Longchenpa.

The most detailed discussion of the Longchenpa's spiritual pedigree is located in the nineteenth century work, *Entrance for the Three Faiths (dad pa gsum gyi 'jug ngogs)*, the lengthy biography composed by Lakla Chödrup. The first chapter of this work is devoted to scriptural and logical arguments for Longchenpa's exalted spiritual status and virtual preordination as an important religious figure. In this chapter, Lakla Chödrup carefully catalogues several citations from a variety of scriptural sources prophesizing Longchenpa's spiritual mission to revitalize the Transmitted Precepts (*bka' ma*) and Revelation (*gter ma*) traditions of Nyingma Buddhism during a period of their decline.

Utilizing general prophetic statements drawn from works such as the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* (skt. *prajñāparamitāsūtra*, tib. *pha rol tu phyin pa'i mdo)* and the *Mañjuśrī Root Tantra* (tib. *'jam dpal rtsa rgyud*, skt. *mūlamañjuśrītantra*) the author identifies Longchenpa as an emanation either of Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of wisdom, or the Buddha Samanatabhadra.[17] He also cites the *Oral Transmission of Machik Lapdron* (*ma gcig snyan brgyud*) and remarks made by Vimalamitra, an important figure in Great Perfection history, describing both as containing specific references to the future birth of Longchenpa.

Lakla Chödrup also cites various sources in the *Seminal Heart* literature in his discussion of the connection between the birth of the Tibetan King Trisong Detsen's (*khri srong lde'u btsan*, 742-797) daughter Lhacam and that of Longchenpa five hundred years later. According to legend, Padmasambhava revived the princess after she had died, and thereupon initiated her into the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākiṇīs* cycle, conferring upon her the esoteric name of Padma Ledreltsel (*pad ma las 'brel rtsal*), "one whose dynamism is karmically linked to

Padmasambhava." Next, he concealed a Treasure text (*gter ma*) to be revealed by a later incarnation of the princess, and then prophesized that at a future time, during a degenerate age, she would meet with these teachings, and in particular encounter this profound Treasure, and benefit sentient beings thereby. He further predicted that she would become known as Drimay Özer ("Stainless Lightrays"), one of Longchenpa's most commonly used names. These latter prophecies are found in the *Seminal Quintessence of the Ḍākiṇīs (mkha' 'gro yang tig)*, a group of works not surprisingly composed by Longchenpa himself.[18]

Lakla Chödrup also uses the classic Buddhist hermeneutical strategy of employing syllogistic reasoning and scriptural citation to argue for the position that it is not contradictory to assert that Longchenpa was an emanation of the Bodhisattvas Mañjuśri *and* Avalokiteśvara. He suggests that from a logical point of view, this position is appropriate since Bodhisattvas of the Ārya rank are able to manifest in inconceivable ways for the benefit of sentient beings. To further support his position he cites the verses of prayer to the incarnations of Jikmay Lingpa which states that there is no contradiction in holding Longchenpa to be emanations of both bodhisattvas.[19]

Padma Lingpa devotes over thirty pages to a discussion of his own august spiritual antecedents, which includes a reinterpretation as Longchenpa. This is not surprising since his explicit agenda was to establish himself as the rightful heir to the spiritual legacies of not only Longchenpa himself, but also the Seminal Heart tradition as it was revealed to Pema Ledreltsel and its ultimate mythic originator Padmasambhava. Thus, Padma Lingpa includes detailed narrative accounts of Padmasambhava's arrival in Tibet, his encounters with King Trisong Detsen and his daughter Pemasal (*pad ma gsal*), his prophetic remarks concerning her future lives, and so forth. After touching on some of the intervening "impure" and "pure" rebirths of the princess, Padma Lingpa then continues with an elaborate description of the life of the Treasure Revealer Pema Ledreltsel, the somewhat shadowy figure who is said to have discovered *The Seminal Heart of the Ḍākiṇīs*.[20] Although Pema Ledreltsel is a pivotal figure in the transmission of the Seminal Heart tradition, the details of his biography are quite unusual. He is said to have been the product of an incestuous relationship between a tantric priest and his sister, and was born destitute and friendless. Through a chance encounter with a monk, Pema Ledreltsel was able to discover a series of treasure texts, but later was accused of perpetrating a fraud. After a period of wandering with a group of disciples, Pema Ledreltsel meets the third

Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (*rang byung rdo rje*, 1284-1339), who asks for the complete *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākiṇīs* cycle. Rangjung Dorje himself thus becomes one of the most significant figures in the Seminal Heart transmission lineage. After another period of wandering Pema Ledreltsel takes up with a woman with whom he practices secret sexual yogic techniques. Later on, through conflict with this woman, Pema Ledreltsel is wounded and dies shortly afterwards.[21] The importance of Padma Lingpa's elaboration of his purported previous incarnations in relation to Longchenpa is that he incidentally creates a narrative about Longchenpa's spiritual qualifications as well in trying to substantiate his claims.

In his biography of Longchenpa, *The Amazing Celebration of Supreme Good Fortune (ngo mtshar skal bzang mchog gi dga' ston)*, like Lakla Chödrup, Lhalung Thuksay also cites several prophesies concerning his subject's identity. He draws these citations from texts such as *The Chronicles of Padma (pad ma'i bka' thang)*, *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra (sgra thal 'gyur)*, and *The Golden Rosary: A Dialogue on the Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs (mkha' 'gro snying thig zhus lan gser phreng)*. In general, these citations seem to be intended to establish Longchenpa's credentials as a "Treasure Revealer" (*gter ston*) rather than his credentials as a scholar. In fact, Lhalung Thuksay's account appears to be an abridgement of Padma Lingpa's narrative, which is not surprising since Padma Lingpa himself founded the present monastic seat for both the Thuksay and the Padma Lingpa's Speech Emanation (*gsung sprul*) incarnation lineages.[22] Unlike Lakla Chödrup, however, Lhalung Thuksay does not mention anything about Longchenpa being an incarnation of any buddha or bodhisattva such as Mañjuśrī.[23]

Longchenpa himself is clearly interested in proving his identity as the incarnation of Pema Ledreltsel, and hence the Princess Pemasel, the person designated by Padmasambhava to be the recipient of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākiṇīs* tradition. This desire to confirm his identity is particularly well illustrated in his own text entitled *The Luminous Web of Precious Visions (mthong snang rin po che 'od kyi drva ba)*, which he significantly signs using the name Pema Ledreltsel. Germano and Gyatso refer to this and other works of its genre as "visionary autobiographies" in the sense that the author draws upon his or her past life experiences and diverse "material" accessible only through metaphysical means.[24] These visionary autobiographies are intended to engender confidence in the authenticity of the visionary process, and to convince readers that the central figure were not charlatans. It seems likely that

Lakla Chödrup, Padma Lingpa, and Lhalung Thuksay are elaborating on these early themes set in motion, at least in part, by Longchenpa himself.

The other complete accounts of Longchenpa's life such as those of Jikmay Lingpa, Guru Tashi, and Dudjom Rinpoche, include no substantial elaboration on his exalted spiritual identity other than to identify him as "The Second Conqueror" (*rgyal ba gnyis pa*), a common title for lamas of high attainment.

Hence, we see a variety of rhetorically potent strategies employed to heighten Longchenpa's spiritual prestige in the biographical literature, some that he himself used. From a very early period we see the trend towards identifying Longchenpa with the chief "revealer" of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākiṇis*, Pema Ledreltsel, thus appropriating the cultural and rhetorical momentum of this important tradition. Padma Lingpa appropriates this exact same strategy one hundred years later, adding to an already successful gambit the fame and prestige of Longchenpa himself, who enjoyed great reverence and popularity in Bhutan. The prophetic framework for this hermeneutical maneuver already existed in the relevant literature, and as time went on, the scriptural rationale for this interpretation of Longchenpa's life and identity was stabilized and codified in relatively late works such as *The Amazing Celebration of Supreme Good Fortune* of Lakla Chödrup.

Interestingly enough, the earliest explicitly biographical work on Longchenpa in our possession, *Meaning to Behold* by Chödrak Zangpo, makes no clear reference to this facet of Longchenpa's identity. This strikes me as curious since Chödrak Zangpo was clearly a disciple of Longchenpa, was with Longchenpa at various times later in the latter's life, and thus would have probably known about Longchenpa's alternative identity, presumably from the great man himself. Following his description of Longchenpa's familial associations, however, Chödrak Zangpo does make an oblique reference to him being an incarnation of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī when he states, "In the final days, at the end of the the familial lineage of Gyelwa Chokyang (*rgyal ba mchog dbyangs*, ca. 8th-9th centuries), an emanation of Mañjuśrī will propogate the teachings of mantra."[25]

Thus we see from very early on the trend towards identifying Longchenpa with one form of supernatural origin or another, starting with his own self-representation in the *History of the Seminal Heart of the Ḍākiṇis* and continuing with particular energy in Bhutan among Padma

Lingpa and his followers. The popular notion of Longchenpa being an emanation of Mañjuśri also appears to date from among the earliest materials, but interestingly is not emphasized as assertively as one might expect.

FAMILY ANTECENDENTS

Longchenpa was born on the tenth day of the second month of the earth-monkey year of the fifth sixty-year cycle.[26] He appears to have been a member of an aristocratic family, or at any rate to be descended from a venerable family lineage. His father, the master Tenpa Sung (*bstan pa bsrung*), was a descendent of the chieftain of a village in Yoru (*g.yo ru*), located in central Tibet south of Lhasa. His family lineage (literally "bone," *rus gdung*) was called "Rok" (*rog*), and one of his ancestors on his father's side had been Gyelwa Chokyang (*rgyal ba mchog dbyangs*), one of Padmasambhava's 25 direct disciples and Tibet's seven original ordained monks (*sad mi mi bdun*, lit. "seven men who were tested"). Another of Longchenpa's more immediate relatives with great spiritual prestige was his grandfather, called Lhasung (*lha srung*), who reportedly was able to live to the age of one hundred and five through the pseudo-alchemical practice of "extracting the essence of nectar" (*bdud rtsi'i bcud len*). Longchenpa's ancestors on his mother's side of the family were equally august, descending from Dromtönpa (*'brom ston pa*, 1008-1064), Atiśa 's principal Tibetan disciple and founder of the Kadampa (*bka' gdams pa*) school.

This information on Longchenpa's genealogy not only establishes his religious credentials, it situates him within a certain social stratum with all of its attendant issues and concerns. It is possible that Longchenpa's sense of himself as a member of a certain rank, class, or spiritual community that enjoyed prestige and antiquity may have been challenged during the tumultuous events of the mid fourteenth century in central Tibet. Although it is difficult to make definitive statements, it is possible that underlying the various strife and conflict inherent in the struggle for the political and religious identity of central Tibet during this period were ages old local politics involving clan loyalties, alliances, feuds, and so on.

STUDIES/CORPUS

Longchenpa's early education consisted of studying various rites, ceremonies, and "sciences" (*rig gnas*) such as medicine and astrology with his father. As a teenager, he memorized lengthy texts, and expanded his interest into the study of tantric texts from both the Ancient (*rnying ma*)

and Modern (*gsar ma*) traditions. At the age of twelve, Longchenpa journeyed to Samye (*bsam yas*) monastery, where he took up the study of monastic discipline. Longchenpa's longstanding association with this historic and important monastery is reflected not only in terms of his being related on his father's side to Gyalwa Choyang, who was, as mentioned above, one of the seven original monks ordained in Tibet and was a direct disciple of Padmasambhava. but also in his several sojourns there. In fact, later in his life Longchenpa became known as "*bsam yas lung mang ba*,"—Samye's recipient of many scriptual transmissions.

Among the most significant events in Longchenpa's education as a young adult was his entry into the Sangphu Neutok monastic college. Sangphu was founded by the translator Ngok Lekpay Sherap (*ngogs legs pa'i shes rab*, ca. eleventh century), and was the preeminent institution for the study of logic and epistemology in Tibet. In fact, it was the influence of this man and institution that was one of the primary factors behind the movement of Tibetan Buddhism towards a more scholastic approach. During Longchenpa's lifetime, Sangphu remained an important seat of learning.[27] The focus of Longchenpa's attention also shifted during this time from ritual and meditation to syllogism and debate in the form of works by Asaṅga, Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, among others. By all accounts he excelled in his studies.

Towards the end of his stay at Sangphu, we see an early example of Longchenpa's impatience with what he perceived to be the frivolous behavior of ostensibly religious figures. This case in question is a conflict Longchenpa had with a group of scholars from Khams, who appeared to him to be sectarian and of poor moral character. The literary result of his disgust with these scholars was a thirty line alphabetically arranged poem entitled *The Thirty Letters of the Alphabet (ka kha sum cu)*. This bitter but witty work is a savage attack on the dubious conduct of the persons in question, likening them to demons and accusing them of actions such as killing, boozing, and whoring, to mention but a few.[28]

As important as this seven year period at Sangphu was, Longchenpa's decisive educational experience was probably the period he spent living and practicing with his principal teacher Kumārādza (*kumārarāja, gzhon nu rgyal po*, 1266-1343). Besides receiving almost all his more important Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) teachings from Kumārādza, Longchenpa was also much influenced by the peripatetic way of life of his followers. The biographical materials mention, for instance, that Kumārādza and his small band of disciples wandered from place to place, living like virtual nomads, exposed to the elements, living and sleeping in crude sack

garments. This quasi-nomadic lifestyle is quite consonant with tropes and metaphors commonly found in Great Perfection literature valorizing space, the absence of boundaries, natural freedom, simplicity, spontaneity, and so forth. Hence, this training with his teacher Kumārādza may be understood as a period during which these images became vivid experiences connected to specific behaviors and lifestyles for Longchenpa.

The various phases of Longchenpa's education provide us with important clues to the formation of the ideas and attitudes that would become apparent in his later writings. The short polemical poem addressed to the Khampa scholars is an early example of this tendency to work out his feeling and emotions through the medium of literature. Moreover, as we shall see below, the feelings of connectedness with Samye and central Tibet, the scholastic education at Sangphu, and the experiences in the retinue of his teacher Kumārādza, all had significant impact on the language and diction employed in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*.

PRACTICE AND TEACHING

After approximately two years living and practicing with his principal guru Kumārādza, Longchenpa is said to have been designated as Kumārādza's successor, after which he embarked on a period of intensive teaching and meditation. During this time Longchenpa emerged as a teacher in his own right. Although Longchenpa's fame as a practitioner and teacher were increasing significantly during this time, he never founded or became affiliated in any significant way with a large religious institution. On the contrary, he apparently preferred the relatively remote hermitage setting of his home monastery called "White-Skull Mountain" (*gang ri thod dkar*).

LONGCHENPA'S PSYCHOLOGY

Longchenpa's tendency to feel out of sync with social, political, and religious trends and events in Tibet, as we have already seen in his polemical work the *ka kha sum cu*, continued into his middle age. The mid-fourteenth century in Tibet was a time of political and social upheaval. The Sakya (*sa skya*) hegemony, together with its Yüan Dynasty patrons was reaching a state of collapse. Religious and regional factions were in open, often violent, conflict. Central Tibet in particular was a contested area, with sites like Samye coming under the control of groups allied with belligerent factions. Among the prominent competing factions active in Central Tibet at that time were the Sakyapas, the Drigungpas (*'bri gung pa*), and the Phakmodrupas (*phag mo*

gru pa), whose leader was none other than Ta'i Situ Jangchub Gyaltsen. It is roughly during this period of time that we come upon further literary evidence of Longchenpa's profound antipathy towards these factions and his dissatisfaction with political and religious developments in Central Tibet.

Longchenpa's attempts to process his feelings of discontent at the situation in Central Tibet are well documented in a series of didactic narrative poems in which the characters are animals. The plots of several of these narratives revolve around the protagonist—invariably an exalted spiritual personality—being set upon by irreligious forces and being compelled to depart for regions more conducive to religious practice. These stories all take the appearance of a subtle social critique, and convey the impression of being thinly veiled biography. In *The Forest Delights (nags tshal kun tu dga' ba'i gtam)*, for example, Longchenpa states:

> Although you are a person with a beautiful body endowed with the wingspan of
> the threefold training, and
> Have plunged into the lake of study and contemplation,
> Without money, you are despised and rejected by all.
> Wealthy people who are not spiritual and behave badly are respected like gods.
> These days fools are more in demand than excellent people;
> Having seen this, I will depart for the forest![29]

Again, in *The Mount Potala Delights (po ta la kun tu dga' ba'i gtam)*, Longchenpa expresses his sense of discouragement at the current state of affairs:

> At that time townships and temple-colleges were full of scoundrels who caused trouble for good and decent people. Even those who had entered the monastic order did seek out learning, discipline, or meditative stabilization, but instead fell into the pond of sensual pleasures. Similarly, householders had fallen and lost any sense of shame and had transgressed ancient traditions. Seeing this lack of reverence for the three jewels and one's parents, decent peoples' minds were saddened.[30]

Finally, in probably the best example of Longchenpa's inclination to insert autobiographical elements into these narratives, we have *The Swan's Questions and Answers (ngang pa'i dris lan*

sprin gyi snying po). In this work, Longchenpa's perception of himself as an unjustly ostracized pariah is clearly evident, and the references to his specific situation are more explicit than in the previous examples. The story chronicles a noble swan's flight from the formerly sacred precincts of Samye to more hospitable environs. The swan in the story is in reality an emanation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, and is clearly patterned on Longchenpa himself. In what is likely an observation about his own lack of status in the then-current institutional hierarchy at Samye and the deteriorating political situation, he states:

> In such an environment, this man of bSam-yas
> Finds it hard to make a living; he is constantly scorned by all.
> Those who uphold spiritual values are despised and their qualities are belittled.
> The crowd of vulgar people living in this country
> Are never pleased and nobody can make them shape up.
> Close by and far away the incidences of violence increase.
> The sincere are cursed and evil behavior is praised.
> Having seen this state of affairs my mind is revolted.[31]

Longchenpa ("this man of Samye," a.k.a. *bsam yas lung mang ba*) is despondent and plans to fly away to the peaceful region variously described as to the south or to the east of, "the snow mountains" (i.e., Tibet). Figuratively speaking, this is precisely what Longchenpa did in the mid 1350s when he departed for Bhutan, a country he describes in almost exactly the same terms he uses to describe the mythical city referred to in the above narrative.

His departure was precipitated by a wish to escape the increasing military presence in Central Tibet, as he makes clear in his *Praise to Bumthang (bum thang lha'i sbas yul kyi bkod pa la bsngags pa me tog skyed tshal),* written in 1355.[32] The following makes the reasons for his departure explicit:

> These days, due to the presence of barbarous people in the place,
> The Conqueror's teaching is nearly disappearing in Central Tibet.
> The demon armies of foreign invaders are disturbing the heart of the land, and thus
> It is appropriate to achieve enlightenment in a place such as this [i.e., Bhutan].
> On the one hand, the gateways of this precious, hidden borderland

Will open quickly, in no time at all,
And on the other hand, the Mongol invading forces had nearly arrived.
For these reasons my worry and depression increase, and
Hence, those persons who desire liberation
Should forsake attachment to their own country and
Achieve profound suchness at all times.
Therefore, the time for traveling to the hidden borderland [of Bhutan] has arrived![33]

Once Longchenpa had arrived in the Bumthang region of Bhutan, he found it very congenial to peaceful, spiritual pursuits. For example, he states:

The valley of Rinchen U-ra in the southeast
Is lovely and circular like the shape of a wheel.
Its Villages are well developed and its estates are many.
Jeweled streams flow gently southwest.
On its slopes are sites for attaining realizations, and
Its intermediate border areas are ringed with monasteries.
The grasses are nourishing and the cows are particularly productive.
Its trees and fruits are excellent and its forests are marvelous!
In this country medicines are extremely potent and there are only a few types of illness.
[In fact], this land resembles the Tibetan province of Ü—
In the Autumn it is neither too cool nor too warm.
Since the lineage of Tibetan religious kings and
Pure Tibetans reside there, it is especially exalted.[34]

These passages give us a fairly clear idea what some of the key motivating factors were for Longchenpa in making his decision to depart for Bhutan in the mid-1350s. The military and political situation had become untenable, and there were fewer and fewer opportunities to pursue the religious path in the serene setting he desired. Moreover, the passages also point to personal idiosyncrasies and traits that we have seen before, that is, Longchenpa's tendency to feel persecuted or alienated, his feeling of superiority, his strong connection with Central Tibet, and so forth. Although there is no explicit reference to the Phakmodrupas or Jangchup

Gyaltsen, it is not unreasonable to assume that their military presence and activity in Central Tibet at the time also contributed to Longchenpa's sense of alienation and anxiety. Finally, echoing the paradoxical relationship between Bhutan as exisiting both on the margins of Tibetan religion and culture, and at the same time as a central place unto itself alluded to in the previous chapter, the last passage praises Bhutan not for its unique characteristics, but for its strong resemblance to Central Tibet.

TA'I SITU

From here we must turn briefly to the critical issue of Longchenpa's relationship with Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen. Jangchup Gyaltsen was the leading political figure in Tibet during the latter years of Longchenpa's life. Not only was he a key figure behind many of the trends in Tibet that Longchenpa found so problematic, but in fact the two came into direct conflict in the 1350s.

Jangchup Gyaltsen and the clan he led, the Phakmodrupas, were in constant conflict with various other competing groups throughout most of the early fourteenth century. Among the more prominent of the competing groups were the religious factions of the Sakya-pas and the Drigung-pas. Longchenpa, while no fan of the increasing military presence in Central Tibet, became implicated in a bitter feud between the leader of the Drigungpas and the leader of the Phakmodrupas, i.e., Jangchup Gyaltsen. Jangchup Gyaltsen reportedly came to view Longchenpa as a significant enemy, to the extent that he tried to have him assassinated.[35]

In addition, it is during this crucial time period of the early 1350s that Jangchup Gyaltsen assumed control of Central Tibet, and Samye Monastery along with it.[36] We must bear in mind that it is precisely during this general time period that Longchenpa is writing his fables on the pitiful state of affairs at Samye. He fled for Bhutan shortly thereafter, ostensibly due to his conflict with Ta'i Situ, and to his disgust with the military and activities in Tibet that he saw as morally questionable, such as monks engaged in commerce, and lascivious behavior. It thus appears that his perhaps self-imposed exile in Bhutan was a direct result of the political and military machinations of Jangchup Gyaltsen, who was at that time attempting to revive an imperial ethos in Central Tibet with himself at the head. It is interesting, however, that as prominent a place as Jangchup Gyaltsen occupies in the imaginations of Longchenpa's

biographers, Longchenpa does not seem to appear in either of Jangchup Gyaltsen's autobiographies.[37]

Here it may be useful to consider briefly Ta'i Situ's biography. Like Longchenpa, Jangchup Gyaltsen was born into an important and ancient ruling family, the *rlang* clan. Although he was educated at Sakya and formed important relationships with certain Sakya lamas, Jangchup Gyaltsen was in nearly constant conflict with the Sakya rulers from the time he was a young adult. During this time, and especially following his installation as the myriarch (*khri dpon*) of his home province of Neudong (*sne'u gdong),* Jangchup Gyaltsen often found himself arguing cases in front of ministers and other representatives of the ruling authorities. Thus we can see that his young and middle adulthood were filled with experiences of legal procedures, adjudication, arbitration, and so forth. Ta'i Situ's genius was to reunite Tibet after it had become fragmented into separate myriarchies following the demise of the Dynastic Period hundreds of years earlier. While the Sakyapas had achieved a preliminary hegemony in the preceding century, they had relied on the foreign powers of the Mongols to do so. In contrast, Ta'i Situ attempted to create a united Tibetan polity with indigenous rule. He achieved this remarkable feat through his personal charisma, military might, and the dramatic and effective rhetoric of restoring the prestige of the Dynastic Period through re-introducing its legal codes, festivals, and a new Imperial mythos. Even today, Tibetan historical works count the restoration of law and order into Tibetan civil life as one of Jangchup Gyaltsen's most enduring contributions. His legacy, then, may be summarized in terms of his political reunification of Tibet and his re-introduction of legal codes dating from the dynastic period into Tibetan society. His preoccupation with unity, crime and punishment, and military adventure all appear to have made a strong impression on Longchenpa, and these factors are precisely the ones we find expressed in a subtle and nuanced way in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality.*

ORIGIN OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN TA'I SITU AND LONGCHENPA

The conflict between Jangchup Gyaltsen and Lonchenpa arose mainly due to political reasons. The Drigung and the Phakmogru traditions were very close, and in fact were transmitted from a single lineage. The founder of the Phakmogrupa school was Drogön Phakmogrupa (*'gro dgon phag mo gru pa*, 1110-1170), while the founder of the Drigungpa school was Jikden Gönpo (*'Jig rten dgon po*, b. 1143), himself a disciple of Phakmogrupa. Therefore it is said that the

relationship between the Phakmogrupa and the Drigungpa schools was like two arms of one body, or like the right and left eyes of one person. They were very friendly politically and spiritually such that Ta'i Situ's biography describes them as being like one family.

Later on, however, there appears to have been a serious power struggle between these two groups. In Longchenpa's biography we find some mention of this conflict. Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen, before taking power into his hand in 1354 by overcoming the Sakyapas and consolidating his power, was just the Phakmodrupa myriarch (*khrid dpon*) (i.e., not the ruler of a unified Tibet). At that time he enjoyed a very close relationship with the Drigungpas. At that time it was the custom that when the Drigung myriarch dies high officials from the Phakmogrupa normally did not attend [his funeral] individually, but rather send some delegates or other emissaries. However, in this case Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen himself attended the ceremony. This was considered a great honor, and it was the first time he had visited the Drigung myriarch personally.

The relations between the late Drigung myriarch Yeshe Palpa (*Ye shes dpal pa*) and Jangchup Gyaltsen had been very close, and there is evidence that the Drigungpa myriarch had requested Ta'i Situ to look after or guide the Drigungpa after his death. Hence, following the funeral ceremony he was approached for advice concerning the appointment of the regent. The regent traditionally handles all the political activities and attends to the ongoing administrative work of the clan. In the Drigungpa, this regent is called the Gompa (*sgom pa*, literally "meditator"), and is more or less equivalent to the roles played by the Desi (*bde srid*) in the Geluk School, and the Pönchen (*dpon chen*) in the Sakya School. Ta'i Situ proposed that Kunga Dorje (*kun dga rdo rje*), who had been the junior regent at the time of the death of Yeshe Palpa, should be appointed as senior regent, and that Kunga Rinchen (*kun dga' rin chen*) (a.k.a. Gompa Künrin), who had been the senior regent, should be appointed as the junior regent. On his advice, the appointment was made. Künrin's followers were disappointed at the outcome of Jangchup Gyaltsen's decision, and this became the kernel of discord between these two clans as time went on.

Later on, after Künrin had become the Drigung myriarch, he pursued armed conflicts with Ta'i Situ and others. According to accounts in some of Longchenpa's biographies, Gompa Künrin became aware of a prophecy of Padmasambhava that predicted his death and rebirth in hell. The prophecy also mentioned that Künrin would be converted and liberated by an

"emanation of Mañjuśī."[38] Hearing that Longchenpa was such an incarnation Künrin actively sought him out and invited him to Drigung, at which time they entered into a guru-disciple relationship. Around 1350-1351, Longchenpa undertook a major rennovation of an important temple at Zha (*zhva*) at the invitation of Gompa Künrin.[39] The relationship between Longchenpa and Gompa Künrin occurred in the early 1350s, a time when the latter was engaged in military and personal conflict with Jangchup Gyaltsen. It is reported in several sources that Jangchup Gyaltsen interpreted this evidently close association between the men as a sign that the two were somehow in league, and appears to have taken an active dislike to Longchenpa as a result, referring to him derisively as "the Drigung's main teacher."[40] Künrin died in 1353, but the enmity Ta'i Situ felt evidently did not abate, and hence Longchenpa was forced to elude his soldiers and set off for Bhutan, where we know he arrived in or before 1355.[41]

LAST DAYS IN BHUTAN AND TIBET

Longchenpa was reportedly very active during his time in Bhutan, establishing and rennovating many monasteries and retreat facilities. He taught widely, and is credited with reviving the fortunes of the Nyingma and Great Perfection traditions in that region. He composed several important texts there, very likely including *The Treasury of Abiding Reality.* His home base was the famous Tharpa Ling (*thar pa gling*) monastery, still standing today in Bumthang.[42] He also fathered at least one son with a nun during his stay in Bhutan.[43] During this period of exile, Longchenpa received numerous vistors from Tibet who encouraged him to return to Central Tibet. Finally, a reconciliation between Longchenpa and Ta'i Situ was eventually engineered by Sangyepel (*sangs rgyas dpal*), and Ta'i Situ invited Longchenpa to return to Tibet, offered clothes and other material items, and received tantric initations and other teachings from him.[44] In fact, there is a tradition that Longchenpa's epithet (*klong chen rab 'byams pa*, "infinite open space") was given to him by Jangchup Gyaltsen himself, although the veracity of this story is uncertain.[45] Although we have no definite dates for for Longchenpa's sojourn in Bhutan, I conjecture that it lasted approximately seven years, starting around 1353 and terminating around 1360.

In 1363, when he was fifty-six years old, Longchenpa took ill, and began to prepare for his eventual passing by composing his final testaments (*zhal chems*). FInally, late in that same year, Longchenpa had a series of visions and gave his final advice to his disciples. In accordance with

the literary convention, he is then said to have entered a state of deep meditation, and many miraculous signs are said to have manifested. Familar phenomena for events such as these, including rainbows, earthquakes, showers of flowers, to name just a few, are reported to have accompanied Longchenpa's final hours and twenty-five days following his death.

CONCLUSION

Whatever the pitfalls of using an author's biographical and historical circumstances in the interpretation of her literary works, it is certainly an enterprise well worth the trouble. In the case of Longchenpa, the difficulties are legion, but the rewards are as well. For although we must navigate the complexities of reading biographies across huge temporal and cultural distances, a picture of a real person with concerns and traits specific to him begins to emerge.

The biographical materials clearly present a man with a strong sense of family, spiritual, and regional identity. Longchenpa's sense of propriety and moral righteousness are likely the result of his relatively prestigious position in Tibetan society. His family's links with Tibet's august spiritual past (in the form of prominent relatives from Tibet's religious history) must have given him some sense of authority and legitimacy in that domain. Moreover, his strong connection with Central Tibet in general, and to Samye Monastery in particular, likely account for his regional and national pride. These factors made it easier for Longchenpa to criticize the disturbing negative trends in Tibet of increased militarization, the erosion of religious ethics, and so forth. His voice is authorized in a sense by his rightful claim to the glorious political and religious past. His critiques and injunctions all possess the added moral and rhetorical force that goes along with the prestige of his background and stature.

Longchenpa's personality, however, was not merely a result of his close association with important Tibetan historical and religious icons—it was formed as well by the varied experiences of his life. His highly specialized education, in particular, is immediately evident as a profound influence. It is a stylistic convention in most Tibetan hagiographies to emphasize the breadth and depth of the person's religious education, and in that sense this information does little to distinguish Longchenpa from other Tibetan religious figures. Nevertheless, the breadth of his education and his educational experiences are easy to discern throughout his writings. His literary compositions themselves cover a very wide range of subjects and genres, including, but not limited to, logic, epistemology, history, poetics, narrative, ritual, letters, polemics, and so

forth. Longchenpa's fluency in this wide variety of genres is a direct reflection of his eclectic education. Furthermore, the breadth and depth of his education was such that he could even shift easily between modes of discourse in a single literary work.

Among his educational experiences, two stand out as being particularly influential: the seven years he spent at Sangphu Neutok, and the years traveling and practicing with his main teacher Kumārādza. The time at Sangphu was formative since it was here that Longchenpa learned to employ the dominant philosophical discourse of the day. Longchenpa's primary interests, as we already know, lay elsewhere, but this knowledge allowed him to write for a larger audience, and to use the tools of analysis against itself to some extent. Studying at Sangphu Neutok was an "educational" experience in a very obvious way (Sangphu being among the premier institutions of its time), but his time in the company of Kumārādza was educational in another, but equally significant way. Kumārādza's quasi-nomadic lifestyle may very well have influenced Longchenpa's use of Great Perfection tropes valorizing space, freedom, simplicity, spontaneity, and so forth. These very tropes completely pervade Longchenpa's Great Perfection writings, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in particular.

Another crucial aspect of Longchenpa's life is his tendency to express his experiences, attitudes, and historical observations through works ostensibly concerned with completely unrelated topics such as philosophy, ethics, and so on. In fact, certain works contain so many such references as to be nearly autobiograhpical in character. These autobiographical traces are found in polemical texts such as *The Thirty Letters of the Alphabet*, didactic fables such as *The Forest Delights*, *The Mount Potala Delights*, and *The Swan's Questions and Answers*, odes such as *Praise to Bumthang*, and so forth. In the final chapter I will argue that *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* represents another example of Longchenpa's tendency to subtly integrate his own attitudes and experiences into his compositions.

Finally, there is the issue of Longchenpa's complex relationship with the most powerful Tibetan political figure of the time, Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen. Viewed superficially, these two men should have had very few occasions to interact since their realms of expertise and influence were so divergent. Nevertheless, despite this, due perhaps to their individual prominence in their respective domains, their paths did cross with somewhat spectacular results. The tone and content of Longchenpa's expressions of anger and frustration at the degradation of Tibetan religious and secular society may easily be interpreted as being implicit criticisms of the

prominent and powerful figures of the day. We have already seen how aggravated Longchenpa was by the military activity and the presence of irreligious people in Central Tibet (particularly at Samye), both of which can be at least indirectly tied to Jangchup Gyaltsen and the Phakmodrupas. Specifically, Longchenpa's relationship with Jangchup Gyalsten's rivals, the Drigungpas, brought two men came into direct conflict, and became the principal reason for the former's flight to Bhutan. It was during this last period of intense creative activity in exile that Longchenpa most likely composed *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, and many of the themes and metaphors he employs in this work seem directly influenced by these events and experiences.

Hence, all of these biographical details play a part in the rhetorical mood evoked by Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. The remaining two chapters, and the final chapter in particular, will explore these connections in far greater detail.

---

1 Janet B. Gyatso, *Apparitions of Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 6.

2 Janet Gyatso, *Apparitions of Self*, 103.

3 J. LeGoff, *The Medieval Imagination*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 3. Cited in Steven Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 74.

4 Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*, 75.

5 The identity of Chödrak Zangpo is unclear. In the colophon to his biography of Longchenpa, he refers to himself as "Chödrak Zangpo, the man from mDo-khams, the supreme son of the father" (*chos grags bzang po mdo khams pa/ pha yi bu mchog*). This introduces the intriguing possibility that Chödrak Zangpo was Longchenpa's actual son, especially given the fact that Longchenpa purportedly did indeed have children. The more likely possibility, however, is that Chödrak Zangpo was a very close disciple of Longchenpa, since the terminology of spiritual parentage is commonly used in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist literature to refer to important teacher-disciple relationships. At any rate, Longchenp and Chödrak Zangpo were contemporaries, a fact attested to by certain colophons to Longchenpa's works that identify Chödrak Zangpo as the person who requested their composition. See Chödrak Zangpo, *kun mkhyen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam thar mthong ba don ldan* in *Bi ma snying thig, Vol. 4* (Darjeeling: Lama Jigtrak and Tulku Pema Wangyal, 1973?), 91.1-2; *kun mkhyen klong chen rabs 'byams kyi rnam thar* (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1993), 231. For a discussion of Longchenpa's progeny, see Michael Aris, *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives: A*

Study of Pemalingpa (1450-1521) and the Sixth Dalai Lama (1683-1706) (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), 30-31. For an example of one of Longchenpa's texts whose composition was explicitly requested by Chödrak Zangpo, see his *Questions and Answers on Mind and Primordial Wisdom (sems dang ye shes kyi dris lan)* in *Miscellaneous Writings of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Volume 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 19730, 377-393.

6 Chödrak Zangpo, *mthong ba don ldan* in *Bi ma snying thig, Vol. 4* (Darjeeling: Lama Jigtrak and Tulku Pema Wangyal, 1973?), 1-91; *kun mkhyen klong chen rabs 'byams kyi rnam thar ,* 167-232.

7 gLag bla bsod nams chos 'grub, *kun mkhyen klong chen rabs 'byams kyi rnam thar dad pa gsum gyi 'jugs ngogs,* in *kun mkhyen klong chen rabs 'byams kyi rnam thar* (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1993), 1-166.

8 The author of this biography, Glag-bla Chos-'grub, belongs to the late 19th century. He is best known for his commentary on Karma-chags-med's Prayer to be reborn in the Sukhavati Paradise (*Mkhas grub karma chags med kyis mdzad pa'i Rnam dag bde chen zhing gi smon lam gyi 'grel bshad thar lam snang byed*). This large text, also called the *Bde smon khrid yig,* formed part of the *Rtsib-ri par ma* collection and is scheduled for English translation in the Dharmakara series. He was connected with Rdzong-sar in Sde-dge and seems to have been a student of 'Jam-dbyangs Mkhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po. He signs the *Bde smon khrid yig* with Rme-ri Dge-slong Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-grags-pa and Bsod-nams-chos-'grub. Alak Zenkar Rimpoche, Konchok Tenzin and their group have published the collected works of Glag-bla in Sichuan. This has been reprinted in Dharamsala with an introduction by Matthew Kapstein. (E. Gene Smith, personal communication, April 4, 1999).

9 Kunzang Gyurme Chokdrup (*Kun bzang 'gyur med mchog grub dpal 'bar 'phrin las rab rgyas dge legs dpal bzang po*), *The Amazing Celebration of Supreme Good Fortune (kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po gter chen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam par thar pa cung zad spros pa ngo mtshar skal bzang mchog gi dga' ston)* (Delhi: Ngawang Chodron, 1984).

10 Padma Lingpa publicly declared himself the successor to Longchenpa's line of reincarnations, and thus had an enormous interest in staking out his claim to this potent symbolic figure. Michael Aris's Book *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives* deals extensively with Padma Lingpa's biographical and autobiographical materials, which include important comments pertaining to Longchenpa's biography. We cannot, however, be certain of the veracity of Padma Lingpa's remarks concerning Longchenpa's life. See Padma Lingpa, *Autobiography of Padma Lingpa* in *The Rediscovered Teachings of the Great Padma-Gling-pa Vol. 14*

(Thimpu and Delhi, Kunzang Tobgay, 1976), 34-50. See also Pema Tsewang (*pad ma tshe dbang*), *Biography of Padma-gling-pa Gter-ston (pad gling lo rgyus drang gtam)* (Thimpu, National Library of Bhutan, 1991), pp. 19 *et seq.*

11 Geshe Gendun Rinchen, *Ear-Ornament of New Intelligence: A Religious History of the Taming of Bhutan and the Forested Southern Regions (dpal ldan 'brug pa'i gdul zhing lho phyogs nags mo'i ljongs chos 'byung blo gsar rna ba'i rgyan)* (Bhutan: 1976), pp. 72a.6.

12 *The Ornament Pervading the Entire World: A Narrative Account of the Precious Collected Early Translation Tantras (snga 'gyur rgyud 'bum rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gling tha gru khyab pa'i rgyan).* See Jigme Lingpa, *The Collected Works of 'Jigs-med-gling-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje 1729-1798, Vol. 3* (Gangtok: Pema Thinley for Dodrupchen Rinpoche, 1985), 189.6-216.3

13 Guru Tashi (*Gu ru bkra shis*), *bstan pa'i snying po gsang chen 'gyur nges don zab mo'i chos kyi byung gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad mkhas pa dga' byed ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtsho* (Beijing: krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1990), 214-240.; 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje (Dudjom Rinpoche), *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 575-596. Tashi Tsering of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives informed me in a private conversation that Dudjom Rinpoche's account

14 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal, *The Blue Annals (deb ther sngon po)*, translated by George N. Roerich (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995), 200, 201, 309, 529, 723, *et passim.*

15 See Padma las-'brel-rtsal (a.k.a. kLong chen pa), *The Luminous Web of Precious Visions (mthong snang rin po che 'od kyi drva ba)* in *snying thig ya bzhi* vol. 9 (Delhi: Sherab Gyaltsen Lama1971), 203-266. See also David Germano and Janet B. Gyatso, "Longchenpa and the Possession of the Ḍākiṇis," in David G. White, ed., *Tantric Religions in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

16 Among the animal fables see, for instance, Lonchenpa, *The Story of the Rabbit (ri bong gi rtogs brjod pa legs par 'doms pa lha'i rnga bo che lta bu'i gtam), The Fable of the Delightful Potala Mountain (po ta la kun tu dga' ba'i gtam), The Wildwood Delights (nags tshal kun tu dga' ba'i gtam), A Swan's Questions and Answers (ngang pa'i dris lan sprin kyi snying po).* Other important works by Longchenpa that contain an autobiographical dimension include his *Praise to Bumthang (bum thang lha'i sbas yul gyi bkod pa la bsngangs pa me tog skyed tshal), The Alphabetic Verses on the Assembly of Khampa Scholars (rkyen la khams 'dus pa ka kha sum cu),* and so forth. All of the texts mentioned above are found in the *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1973).

17 Lakla Chödrup, *Entrance of the Three Faiths*, 6-7.

[18] *Entrance for the Three Faiths*, 9. The simple assertion that Longchenpa is the reincarnation of the princess Lhacam Pemasel or another figure named Tsultrim Dorje (a.k.a. Pema Ledreltsel) is not as unproblematic as it might appear in the above discussion. Longchenpa's actual claim was that he was the emanation (*sprul pa*) of the latter figure, a shadowy character otherwise known as Tsultrim Dorje (*tshul khrims rdo rje*, 1291-?1317), who probably composed the bulk of the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍāki°is* literature. Although this pivotal figure in the history of the Seminal Heart tradition clearly died several years after Longchenpa's birth, the latter asserted that he was the former's rightful incarnation, and thus the legitimate heir to the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍāki°is* tradition. This assertion may have put him in conflict with his illustrious contemporary, Rangjung Dorje (*rang byung rdo rje*, 1284-1339), the third Karmapa. For a detailed discussion of these complex issues, see David F. Germano, *Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, Ḍākinis and Saints in Tibet* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

[19] Lakla Chödrup, *Entrance for the Three Faiths*, p. 9.

[20] Princess Pemasal's succeeding lives are referred to as being "pure" and "impure" in the sense that she had amassed negative karma from previous lives that still needed to be expiated through taking rebirth in difficult circumstances before being able to fulfill Padmasambhava's prophetic predictions as Pema Ledretsel and Longchenpa. See Padma Lingpa, *The Autobiography of Padma Lingpa*, 19.5-21.6.

[21] *Autobiography of Padma Lingpa*, 24.6-

[22] See E. Gene Smith, Preface to *The Amazing Celebration of Supreme Good Fortune*, p. iii.

[23] See Lhalung Tulku V, *The Amazing Celebration of Supreme Good Fortune*, 5.2-10.5.

[24] See Longchenpa (a.k.a., Pema Ledreltsel), *The Luminous Web of Precious Visions*, in *sNying thig ya bzhi, Vol. 9* (*mkha' 'gro yang* thig, Part III) (Delhi: Sherab Gyaltsen, 1975-79), 203-266. For a detailed discussion of this text, see Germano and Gyatso, "Longchenpa and the Possession of the Ḍākiṇis."

[25] *dus kyi tha ma la rgyal ba mchog dbyangs kyi rigs rgyud kyi tha ma la 'jam dbyangs kyi sprul pa gcig gis sngags kyi bstan pa dar bar byed*. See Chödrak Zangpo, *Meaningful to Behold*, 171.

[26] Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein, trans. and ed., *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 575. Dorje and Kapstein identify this date as Saturday, March 2, 1308

[27] See Georges Dreyfus, *Knowledge and Reality* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996).

[28] See Longchenpa, *rkyen la khams 'dus pa ka kha sum cu* in *Miscellaneous Writings of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1973), 268-270.

[29] Longchenpa, *nags tshal kun tu dga' ba'i gtam*, in *Miscellaneous Writings of Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 19730, 139.5-140.1. For an English translation see Herbert Guenther, trans., *A Visionary Journey* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1989), 4.

[30] Longchenpa, *po ta la kun tu dga' ba'i gtam*, in *Miscellaneous Writings of Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 19730, 97.2-97.4.

[31] Longchenpa, *ngang pa'i dris lan sprin gyi snying po*, in *Miscellaneous Writings of Longchenpa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1973), 339.4-339.6. For an English translation, see Herbert Guenther, trans., *Looking Deeper: A Swan's Questions and Answers* (Porthill ID: Timeless Books, 1983), 13.

[32] Longchenpa, *bum thang lha'i sbas yul kyi bkod pa la bsngags pa me tog skyed tshal*, in *Miscellaneous Works of Longchenpa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1973), 235-245.

[33] Longchenpa, *bum thang lha'i sbas yul kyi bkod pa la bsngags pa me tog skyed tshal*, 243.4-244.1.

[34] Longchenpa, *bum thang lha'i sbas yul gyi bkod pa me tog skyed tshal*, in *Miscellaneous Writings of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 1* (Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1973) 243.4-244.1.

[35] Chödrak Zangpo, *mthong ba don ldan*, p. 192.

[36] See Per K. Sørensen, trans., *Tibetan Buddhist Historiography: The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), 35 et passim.

[37] This statement is based on my cursory reading of the *situ bka' chems* and the *rlang po ti se ru*, neither of which I was able to understand very well, since the language was so obscure. Upon consultation with Tibetan scholars, I found that I was not alone in my difficulties in this regard. Nevertheless, having gone over every line in each book, admittedly without much comprehension, I can report that I recognized no reference to Longchenpa. This general thesis appears to be supported by the fact that Leonard van der Kuijp and Luciano Petech also make no mention of any such citation. See Luciano Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols: The Yüan—Sa-skya Period of Tibetan History* (Roma: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990); Leonard van der Kuijp, "On the Life and Political Career of Ta'i-si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302-1364?)" in Ernst Steinkellner, ed., *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Géza on His Seventieth Birthday* (Vienna: Arbeitkreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1991): 277-327.

[38] See, for example, Chödrak Zangpo, *Meaningful to Behold*, p. 185.

[39] Chödrak Zangpo, *Meaningful to Behold*, p. 188.

[40] *'di 'bri gung pa'i rtsa ba'i bla ma yin*. See, for example, Chödrak Zangpo, *Meaningful to Behold*, p. 192; *Blue Annals*, p. 202; *Nyingma School, Vol. 1*, p. 592.

---

[41] See van der Kuijp, "On the Life and Political Career," p. 293; Chödrak Zangpo, *Meaningful to Behold*, pp. 192-193.

[42] See, for example, Guru Tashi, *Religious History*, p. 238.

[43] See Aris, *Bhutan*, p. 155.

[44] Chödrak Zangpo, *Meaningful to Behold*, pp. 196-197; *Nyingma School*, p. 592; van der Kuijp, "On the Life and Political Career," p. 289.

[45] Kunzang Gyurme Chokdrup, *The Amazing Celebration of Supreme Good Fortune (ngo mtshar skal bzang mchog gi dga' ston)*, 46.2-46.5.

CHAPTER FIVE: EXTERIOR READING OF *THE TREASURY OF ABIDING REALITY*

We now turn from a consideration of Longchenpa's biography and its historical context in central and southern Tibet during the fourteenth century to a rhetorical and biographical analysis of a central work in Longchenpa's corpus, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Moving from a general examination of historical and social movements, as well as the biographical details of particular individuals, especially Longchenpa and Jangchup Gyaltsen, to a specific text allows us to understand both the text and its author in his biographical and historical context in new and interesting ways. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is an ideal text to examine in this context, since not only is it rich in literary craft, rhetorical devices, poetry, and so forth, but it is also one of Longchenpa's final major compositions. Indeed, it can be argued that its form and content incarnates the coalescence of Longchenpa's most mature philosophical and literary expression against the backdrop of implicit reflections on his own personal situation in what was most likely the final decade of his life. It crystallizes many of the themes and issues I have discussed in the preceding chapters, among which are elements from the author's biography, relevant religious trends, and pertinent social-political movements in the fourteenth century. My final two chapters, then, will specifically address *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in terms of its capacity to employ sophisticated rhetorics that disclose a wide variety of semantic content ranging over explicit philosophical and contemplative issues, to implicit biographical and social issues.

The present chapter attempts to trace the lineaments of the surface level rhetoric in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. It will begin by situating *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* within Longchenpa's corpus and within Great Perfection literature in general, both historically and thematically. It will continue with a brief general overview of the Great Perfection tradition, followed by an inventory and assessment of the various rhetorical strategies employed in its different genres of literature. Finally, it will provide an outline and analysis of the *gnas lugs mdzod* as a piece of literature, taking stock of its tropes, metaphors, diction, and so forth. Hence it will concentrate primarily on *literary* concerns, attempting to illustrate analyze Longchenpa's use of specific literary devices by employing tools borrowed from Literary Criticism.

The final chapter, then, will focus on reading the same text from a biographical and social point of view, interpreting those same literary devices and rhetorical characteristics outside of the doctrinal and ritual points of view in which it explicitly situates itself and within which it is usually understood.

THE TREASURY OF ABIDING REALITY: TEXT AND CONTEXT

Our discussion of this powerful text will be driven by the following two complementary questions: What insights does *Treasury of Abiding Reality* offer us into Longchenpa's life and work, and, conversely, what insights into *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* does his biography offer us?

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

The foregoing literary survey raises questions as to how these literary materials may have been correlated to the biographical detail and times of Longchenpa's life. As outlined above, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is a work authored late in his life that explicates the Mind Series (*smes sde*) Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) literature that Longchenpa had mastered several decades earlier. It resembles, both in content and style, some of his other famous works on the Seminal Heart including *The Trilogy of Resting at Ease (ngal gso skor gsum)*, among others. While the answer to this question must remain tentative, in the final chapter I will argue for the utility of contextualizing the text's content and terminology within the events of Longchenpa's final years. Finally, I conjecture what I hope are some plausible explanations for Longchenpa's return to and re-contextualization of the evocative rhetoric of the Seminal Heart literature.

As we have seen, Lonchenpa's final years were spent in either self-imposed or forced exile in Bhutan, and then later in his beloved hermitage of White Skull Mountain (*gangs ri thod dkar*) following his reconciliation with Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen. It is most likely during this final stage of Longchenpa's life that he wrote *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. David Germano argues that, despite thematic similarities with certain of his other philosophical works, we can be confident that Longchenpa composed both *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* and *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* quite late in his life, or at least subsequent to the other texts of *The Seven Treasuries*.[1] Perhaps the most compelling piece of evidence supporting the hypothesis that *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is a relatively late work comes from Longchenpa himself. During the

period of exile in Bhutan in the mid-to-late 1350's he composed a partial catalogue (*dkar chag*) of his own works preserved in his collected miscellaneous writings (*gsung thor bu*).[2] The catalogue is arranged thematically and not historically, and in it he mentions by name each of *The Seven Treasuries* except the *Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Thus, one may infer that he had not yet written this text at the time of composing the catalogue, even at this relatively late stage in his life.

It thus appears that *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* was either composed during Longchenpa's period of exile in Bhutan, or shortly after his return to Central Tibet from exile. At first glance, the colophon might be thought to clearly indicate the latter. It is not entirely unproblematic, however, since Longchenpa states in the colophon that, "...the composition was completed by Longchen Rabjampa on the slopes of White Skull Mountain in the noble mansion of Samantabhadra."[3] However, this passage may be interpreted either as meaning that the text was composed entirely at White Skull Mountain, or as meaning that the final compiling or editing (*sbyar ba*) was finished there.[4] In other words, it may be that Longchenpa wrote certain texts (including *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*) elsewhere, and then did the final revisions or editing at White Skull Mountain prior to distributing them, perhaps to insure an auspicious connection (*rten 'brel*) between the text and his favorite hermitage. As for *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, it may also be the case that he composed the root verses or even completed a draft in Bhutan, and then later polished the verses and commentary at White Skull Mountain, which would also account for the colophon's reference to the Tibetan site. Another possibility is that Longchenpa did indeed "compose" the text, in whole or in part, at White Skull Mountain, but his feelings about his experiences in exile were still very strong, even if he had finally been allowed to return just prior to the text's composition. In any event, the evidence for *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* being composed late in Longchenpa's life after he had already composed an index of his entire corpus is extremely strong.

The dating of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is crucial; its position near the end of Longchenpa's life indicates that it may well have been meant to serve as a final testament of sorts, or at least a series of mature reflections on his life. Moreover, the fact that Longchenpa had already written a catalogue of his works that included the vast majority of his important works suggests that he already was in the process of taking stock of his life and work at that time. Hence, the fact that Longchenpa wrote *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* after his catalogue strongly suggests that he may have felt compelled to do so by strong feelings and personal

circumstances. This is important because *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is a rich poetic work reflecting the changes that he had been through in his life, and as such may give us insight into how he himself perceived his experiences during his period of political exile, whether composed during the exile itself, or shortly after its resolution.

LITERARY CONTEXT

Here we lay the groundwork for literary analysis of such texts *as texts*, which can then be interpreted in a variety of ways, but especially in the following two manners: (1) as literary expressions of rhetoric (including their respective biographical, historical, and literary contexts), and (2) as sites for doctrinal or phenomenological explication.[5] In contemporary Buddhist Studies focusing on Tibetan traditions two general methodological orientations have dominated our assessment of religious texts. The first of these tends to view a text as an instantiation of a larger intellectual system that produced it, whether philosophical or practical. The second tends to see texts as openings for particular sets of experiences that often are thought somehow to presage contemporary developments in science, philosophy, psychology, and so forth. Here, however, we will not be looking at a text as a vehicle for systematic argumentation nor as a phenomenological guide to experience, as interesting and valid as such projects may be. We are looking instead at a text as a *text*, or literary artifact, rather than something merely expressive of an external intellectual system or contemplative experiences that exceed the boundaries of the text proper. As a second movement, then, we will examine those literary details—the precise character of metaphors, analogies, tropes, and so forth—for insight into the broader historical, biographical, and literary contexts within which this text seething with rhetorical flourishes and agendas must be understood.

The body of literature that has come to be identified with the "Great Perfection" movement or school evolved over time and has approximately three distinct phases. These roughly correspond to the following three literary movements: (1) The "Mind Series" (*sems sde*), (2) the "Seminal Heart (*snying thig*), and (3) the "Crown Pith" (*spyi ti*) and "Ultra Pith" (*yang ti*).

MIND SERIES

The earliest stratum of Great Perfection literature is comprised primarily of the *Eighteen Texts of the Mind Series (sems sde bco brgyad)*, a series of short aphoristic texts dating from approximately the tenth century and possibly in some cases even earlier. The Mind Series served as a

systematization of earlier traditions and a conservative response to the developing forms of tantric discourse at that time. Stylistically these texts are characterized by their almost absolute denial of all forms of Buddhist meditative practice, especially Mahāyoga forms of tantric praxis that were becoming increasingly popular during this period. Thus, although the language of these Mind Series (*sems sde*) texts explicitly negates practice in general, and tantric practice in particular, it is clear that it is a development or evolution of tantric discourse, and as such may itself be considered tantric in character. Other larger texts such as the influential *All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)* gradually assimilated significant portions of the *Eighteen Texts of the Mind Series*, in which form they found their way into *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*.

SEMINAL HEART

In this very simplified scheme, the next clearly defined literary/religious movement associated with the Great Perfection is that of the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) class. This movement chiefly arose between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, and was in a sense a synthesis of the period's various religious movements, both in India and in Tibet itself. Texts in this category represent a departure from the earlier stratum of Mind Series texts inasmuch as they begin to demonstrate an increasing concern with specific forms of tantric praxis. Among the interesting innovations emerging at that time were practices concerned with elaborate body-based visualizations, as well as a wide variety of rituals, notably important cycles of funerary rites. The emergence of these practices suggests that Great Perfection authors were appropriating tantric doctrines and practices then current in Modernist (*gsar ma*) circles. In addition, the texts of the Seminal Heart tradition incorporate elaborate discussions of cosmogony and cosmology into their synthesis of myth and philosophy, which is another significant departure from the stylistic conventions established in Mind Series texts. These are striking developments since they represent a reversal of the earlier tendency of Great Perfection discourse to establish its own unique identity through rhetorically distancing itself from other forms of tantra. The Seminal Heart thus represents an extension of traditional Great Perfection discourse, and eventually became so dominant that it came to be understood as being synonymous with Great Perfection itself in certain circles.

The vast majority of the Seminal Heart texts appearing between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries were "revealed" or "discovered" texts known as "treasures" (*gter ma*). This category

included the discovery of new "tantras" attributed to transcendental buddhas that claimed to adhere to the stylistic norms set forth in the dynastic period and were eventually codified under the rubric of *The Seventeen Tantras.* It also included exegetical materials attributed to human authors such as Mañjuśimitra (1^{st}-3^{rd} centuries CE), Śrīsiṃha (3^{rd}-8^{th} centuries CE), Jñānasūtra (6^{th}-7^{th} centuries CE), and Vimalamitra (6^{th}-8^{th} centuries CE) that were eventually collected into a set known as *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra (bi ma snying thig).* These two categories, together with the important *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinīs] (mkha' 'gro snying thig)* attributed to Padmasambhava, became the three principal components of the Seminal Heart textual tradition that preceded Longchenpa's own literary activities.

The fact that texts of this class were characterized as being "revelations" of texts authored by ancient Indian figures or transcendental buddhas appears to be bound up with visionary practices of authorship. Tibetan individuals whom we would in modern literary parlance term "authors" may have often genuinely felt these texts were received products stemming from their extrinsic authors who transacted their compositions through the medium of their own dreams and visions. This also points to the fact that many of their actual authors were visionaries who received these texts in dreams, visions, and so forth. In this way indigenous authors were able to make creative contributions to the evolving specifically Tibetan forms of Buddhist discourse, sanctioned by making claims to the authority and authenticity of its Indic origins.

The heterogeneous tradition of the Seminal Heart appears to have evolved in three distinct historical phases prior to the fifteenth century. The first corresponds to the initial period of formation in the eleventh century during which important collections of texts arose. These include, for instance, includes collections such as *The Seventeen Tantras* and *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra. The Seventeen Tantras* were probably composed primarily in the eleventh century, while the earlier strata of commentarial literature found in *The Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra* was redacted in the twelfth century, and thus its composition most likely spanned from the eleventh to twelfth centuries. It was probably during the early part of the eleventh century the Seminal Heart authors were in the process of integrating influences ranging from certain Modernist (*gsar ma*) doctrines to indigenous Tibetan religious concepts into the basic Great Perfection framework that had been worked out on the fertile soil of Tibetan imagination during preceding ninth and

tenth centuries. The second or intermediate period occurs between the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and is characterized by an increasing literary, intellectual, transmissional, and practical stabilization, such that even Modernist figures such as the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (*rang byung rdo rje*, 1284-1339) become deeply involved in its transmission and study. During the third or "final" period of the development of the Seminal Heart tradition, Longchenpa himself codified these complex and heterogeneous traditions into an integrated system of thought and practice that he related to contemporary mainstream Buddhist traditions. This resulted in the production of *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts (snying thig ya bzhi)* and the *Seven Treasuries.*

"CROWN" PITH AND "ULTRA" PITH

Turning to the third larger phase of Great Perfection literature, we will now consider briefly the so-called "Crown" Pith (*spyi ti*) and "Ultra" Pith (*yang ti*) canons found in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum)*. The important central tantra of the Crown Pith tradition—*The Tantra of the Ambrosial Union of Appearances and Life-Worlds (snang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi'i rgyud)*—is a revelation of Nyangrel Nyima Özer (*nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer*, 1124-1192). David Germano argues that the language utilized in this corpus of texts may have represented a twelfth century conservative and rhetorically purist backlash against the importation of non-Mind Series terminology and concepts into purportedly "Great Perfection" literature.[6]

LONGCHENPA'S OWN LITERARY CORPUS

Longchenpa's literary corpus is massive and reflects his wide-ranging interests and expertise. Considering his obvious talents for meditation, philosophy, and poetry, it is not surprising that he composed some of the more enduring works of religious literature in Tibet. These include a whole series of famous and lengthy collections of individual works. Among the more prominent of these are the *Seven Treasuries (mdzod bdun)*, of which *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is one, *The Seminal Heart in Four Parts (snying thig ya bzhi)*, and his well known trilogies: *The Trilogy of Dispelling Darkness (mun sel skor gsum), the Trilogy of Resting at Ease (ngal gso skor gsum)*, and *The Trilogy of Natural Freedom. (rang grol skor gsum)*. In addition to these classic works, however, Longchenpa also wrote a wide of range of texts including didactic fables (*gtam*), works on poetics (*snyan ngag*), ritual (*cho ga*), religious history (*chos 'byung*), and so forth.

Thus, while Longchenpa's literary corpus is broad and diverse, it is its masterly exegesis of the Great Perfection for which it is particularly noted. In fact, it would not be too strong to state that the Great Perfection is the single most important key to understanding Longchenpa's corpus, and indeed his entire world-view. In particular, the purported subject matter of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* itself is the Great Perfection "system," and hence without a general understanding of this system, any rhetorical or biographical analysis of the text will falter by virtue of an inadequate grasp of the surface content. In general, Great Perfection discourse is famous for its supposed focus on mystical states of experience (particularly unitary ones), aphoristic and often apophatic language, and its rhetorical negation of all practical types of activities. Paradoxically, despite the experiential claims made in its texts, and its at times controversial reputation as a mystical tradition unconcerned with intellectual coherence or the conventional value of language and concepts, as a tradition the Great Perfection was in fact intensely *rhetorical*. Longchenpa's massive literary output of Great Perfection exegesis, as well as its profoundly literary quality as great works of poetic philosophy, were in fact the culmination of five centuries of the Great Perfection's trajectory, though its own rhetoric of experience and critique of intellectualism appeared often to conceal its own intensely literary orientation.

The Treasury of Abiding Reality is one of Longchenpa's famous *Seven Treasuries (mdzod bdun)*, a classic collection of Tibetan literature. These works were and continue to be regarded by scholars of the Ancient School (*rnying ma*) as the definitive works of systematic Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) philosophy. The *Treasuries* are acknowledged as classics in their own right, and have formed an essential matrix for later Nyingma scholastic writings on the Great Perfection, and non-tantric Buddhist systems—the nineteenth century corpus of Mipham Gyatso is just one of the most important examples.[7] This imposing corpus of literature achieved near-canonical status for two reasons. First, the *Seven Treasuries* represented arguably the most systematic Nyingma philosophical presentation of non-tantric materials (e.g., *The Treasury of Philosophical Systems, The Wish-Fulfilling Treasury*, and so forth) as of the fourteenth century. We find in these works reflections on issues far more popular in "Modern" (*gsar ma*) school literature, namely exegetical controversies or presentations stemming from the Indic schools such as those related to Mādhyamika, Abhidharma, and so on. Most Nyingma authors had not really shown much interest in these sorts of issues as a site for new exegetical writings up until this time, and it was

only in the 18^{th}-19^{th} centuries with figures such as Mipham that this school's intellectuals again turned to such philosophical concerns in the context of new literary compositions. Secondly, the *Seven Treasuries* are seen as the definitive scholastic works on the Great Perfection. These texts were unusual works of Nyingma literature inasmuch as they were characterized neither as tantras nor recently re-discovered "treasure texts" (*gter ma*), but as the learned reflections of an indigenous Tibetan author. Taken together, the *Seven Treasuries* constitute a scholastic encyclopedia of the Great Perfection.

Hence, for these two reasons, these works became quasi-canonical to the point where people refer to the "Seven Treasuries" as valorized, privileged works, without necessarily knowing anything about their content. Indeed, in contemporary Nyingma circles, referring to someone as being well-read in the *Seven Treasuries* is often just a marker of scholastic expertise, which may have nothing to do with whether the person is actually well read in the literary collection of that name. In fact, even though a significant body of literature commenting on the *Seven Treasuries* never developed, a sort of surreptitious borrowing of passages, ideas, and themes came to pervade Nyingma Great Perfection literature in the following centuries. The influence of these works has exceeded the parameters of the Nyingma tradition, even into the Bön (*bon*) tradition in, for example, the "Treasuries" composed by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (*shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan*, 1859-1935) in part on the model of Longchenpa's much earlier collection.[8]

The *Seven Treasuries* may be said in general to fall into three basic categories: "practical," "encyclopedic," and "poetic."[9] Chief among the so-called "practical" *Treasuries* is *The Treasury of Esoteric Instructions (man ngag rin po che'i mdzod)*, a verse summary of the essentials of Buddhist thought and practice. As such, unlike many of the other *Treasuries*, it does not deal with Great Perfection themes in a detailed or systematic way. Of the "encyclopedic" *Treasuries*, *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle (theg mchog rin po che'i mdzod)* is the most comprehensive dealing with all aspects of Great Perfection philosophy. The other "encyclopedic" *Treasuries* include *The Treasury of Philosophical Systems (grub mtha' rin po che'i mdzod)*, *The Treasury of Words and Meanings (tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*, and *The Wish Fulfilling Treasury (yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod)*. The first is an exhaustive and critical treatment of the range of Buddhist philosophy not limited to tantra. The second is an eleven-chapter summary of Great Perfection thought. Lastly, the third is a text that addresses issues of cosmology and ontology from the perspective of

Modernist and Ancient tradition texts outside the Great Perfection tradition *per se*, although the latter's influences are discernible. Finally, in the category of "poetic" *Treasuries* we find *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* (*chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod*) and *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Each of these is a series of poetic verses accompanied by Longchenpa's own prose commentary on them. *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* can be understood as a hymn to the Enlightening Mind (*byang chub kyi sems, bodhicitta*). *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, on the other hand, discusses the four "commitments" (*dam tshig, samaya*) associated with the Great Perfection—absence (*med pa*), simplicity (*phyal pa*), spontaneity (*lhun grub*), and solitariness or unity (*gcig bu*).

In many ways, these final two *Treasuries* mark the culmination of Longchenpa's thought on the topic of the Great Perfection. Unlike the earlier *Treasuries*, these two do not dwell on systematic expositions of Buddhist or Great Perfection philosophy, but rather appear to integrate deep understanding of Great Perfection doctrine with lived-through experience in striking works of synthetic poetry. One interesting controversy surrounds the classification of these texts however. Longchenpa himself explicitly classifies *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* as belonging to the "Space Series" (*klong sde*) of Atiyoga. Moreover, one may deduce from this that he also wished to include *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* within the Space Series, since both texts deal with more or less identical issues and cite a very similar range of texts and even passages. The problem, however, is that their primary sources are *The All-Creating King Tantra* and related texts (all of which are associated with the "Mind Series" of Atiyoga), and *The Seventeen Tantras*.[10] In the case of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, there is not even one citation of a Space Series text.[11] Thus, although it appears Longchenpa would classify *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* as a Space Series text, curiously enough the texts cited there are all either from the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) or Mind Series (*sems sde*) traditions.

Great Perfection literature in general has very distinctive literary traits, such as the use of radical rhetorics of absence, naturalness, spontaneity, and so forth. These distinctive rhetorics will be examined at length below. Moreover, Longchenpa's masterworks, *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* and *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* are distinctive for being the most intensely poetic of all his compositions, but broader literary traits such as naturalistic rhetoric, reliance on aphorisms, and so forth, tend to dominate the corpus of his Great Perfection writings, which represent the bulk of his work.

RDZOGS CHEN AS A RELIGIOUS SYSTEM

According to the Ancient (*rnying ma*) School of Tibetan Buddhism, the "Great Perfection" (*rdzogs pa chen po*) is the climax of all the Buddhist "vehicles," and the culmination of all Buddhist paths.[12] As such, it occupies the final and highest position in traditional Nyingma doxographical schemes usually arranged as a series of nine vehicles.[13] These nine vehicles include three "causal" and six "resultant" vehicles. These vehicles more or less correspond to traditional hierarchical presentations of schools of Buddhist philosophy and practice. For our purposes, it is useful to distinguish between these nine "vehicles" not only in terms of their doxographical differences, but in terms of the distinctive rhetorical strategies employed in each as well.

The first three vehicles are those of Hearers (*nyan thos kyi theg pa, śravakayāna*), Solitary Buddhas (tib. *rang sangs rgyas kyi theg pa*, skt. *pratyekabuddhayāna*), and Bodhisattvas (tib. *byang chub sems dpa'i theg pa*, skt. *bodhisattvayāna*). The former two correspond to the Lesser Vehicle (tib. *theg dman*, skt. *hīnayāna*), while the latter corresponds to the Great Vehicle (tib. *theg chen*, skt. *mahāyāna*). These three are also somewhat dismissively referred to as "dialectical" vehicles (*mdo'i mtshan nyid theg pa*). Each of these vehicles attempts to persuade its audience through rhetorically emphasizing its special features. Thus, the first two vehicles appeal to their audiences by emphasizing the virtues of individual freedom and self-reliance, while the third vehicle employs a more universal or inclusive rhetoric, appealing to the sentiment of the audience.

The remaining six vehicles roughly correspond to what is commonly referred to as "tantra" and are further divided into three "outer" and three "inner" tantras or vehicles. The former three are termed *kriyā*, *upa*, and *yoga*, and correspond in general to the Action (*bya rgyud, kriyātantra*), Performance (*spyod rgyud, caryātantra*), and Yoga (*rnal 'byor rgyud, yogatantra*) tantras that are Indic in origin but were more elaborated in Tibet by the Modern (*gsar ma*) schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

In the traditional schematic presentation of Tibetan doxographies, Kriyā generally deploys a rhetoric of purity, and concerns itself primarily with issues of ritual bathing, cleanliness (*khrus dang gtsang sbra*), and dietary restrictions, in addition to substances and materials (*rdzas dang yo byad*). It also utilizes rhetoric of servility and its practice is characterized by the meditator's adoption of the attitude of service and devotion towards his or her king or master, which in this

case refers to the Buddha or Bodhisattva being meditated upon. Upatantra texts advocate the philosophical views of Yogatantra, while simulataneously advocating the behavior associated with Kriyātantra. Thus, like Kriyātantra, it rhetorically valorizes purity through the practitioner purifying his or her body, speech, and mind through ritual cleansing, and so forth, but then begins to practice meditation in dependence on the so-called "Five Awakenings" (*mngon byang lnga, pañcābhisambodhi*) normally associated with Yogatantra. Here the mood or sentiment rhetorically evoked is one of companionship or friendship, since the supplicant is exhorted to adopt the attitude of a friend or relative towards the central deity in Upātantra practices. The sixth and last of the so-called "outer" tantric vehicles, Yogatantra, continues to utilize the practice of the Five Awakenings in one's pursuit of the ordinary and supreme attainments (*dngos grub*).

The final three or "inner" vehicles are referred to as the *Mahā, Anu,* and *Ati* vehicles. These vehicles provide the locus for the most distinctive forms of tantric rhetoric in the Nyingma School. Practitioners of Mahāyoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*), fatigued by the excessive emphasis on external rituals such as bathing and fasting, seek instead a method by which they may achieve results with very little effort. Such a method may include the partaking of otherwise forbidden substances such as the five "meats" and the five "nectars" (*sha lnga bdud rtsi lnga*), or the utilization of one's neuroses themselves as paths to enlightenment. Like the texts in the Anuttarara Tantra classification that came to be dominant in its Modern School counterpart, Mahāyoga utilizes both the creation stage (tib. *bskyed rim,* skt. *utpattikrama*) and the perfection stage (tib. *rdzogs rim,* skt. *saṃpannakrama*) styles of meditation. However, although it emphasizes the former, and has two main subdivisions: the path of skillful means (*thabs lam*), and the path of liberation (*grol lam*). The path of skillful means uses practices that formerly bound one with cyclic existence (tib. *'khor ba,* skt. *saṃsāra*) to obtain the result of liberation. In particular the path of skillful means emphasizes the manipulation of one's body's subtle energies and fluids to achieve heightened spiritual levels of consciousness through the use of sexo-yogic methods. The path of liberation, on the other hand, emphasizes gradual contemplation on the process of death, intermediate state, and rebirth as a means to attain enlightenment. Anuyoga (*rjes su rnal 'byor*) emphasizes the perfection stage (*rdzogs rim*) practice, and is generally described as a bridge from the Mahāyoga to Atiyoga paths. Among this vehicle's most important texts are included *The Awesome Lightning of Wisdom (ye shes rngam glog), The Compendium of Awareness*

(kun 'dus rig pa), and *The Collected Wisdom Intentions (dgongs pa 'dus pa)*. Although the Anuyoga cycle is largely ignored in both the scholastic and pratical curricula of most Nyingma institutions, it is still said to surpass the more popular Mahāyoga practices in terms of speed and efficacy.

These two vehicles (particularly the Mahāyoga) represent a major departure from the relatively sedate rhetorical devices found in the three outer tantras. Here we find exceedingly graphic evocations of sex and violence with all the concomitant emotions of lust and terror, as well as the dramatic accoutrements of demons, body fluids, weapons, and so forth. This radical shocking rhetoric is one of the most prominent and powerful found in the Ancient School's texts, and is very much concerned with "real world" issues.

Finally, the Atiyoga vehicle is rhetorically characterized by its integration of appearance and emptiness, rendering the path and the goal identical. Atiyoga thus is at times described as dispensing with both visualized images and with manipulation of internal energies, and is instead primarily concerned with the direct realization of the intrinsic nature of mind that is immaculately pure from time without beginning. It is traditionally divided into three hierarchically arranged sub-divisions: the "Mind Series" (*sems sde*), the "Space Series" (*klong sde*), and the "Esoteric Instruction Series" (*man ngag sde*). The "Mind Series," as the term suggests, is mainly concerned with the mind, and refutes the notion that various mental states exist apart from Self Arisen Primordial Wisdom (*rang byung gi ye shes*).[14] It is a classification of Atiyoga that is said to have descended primarily from Śrīsiṃha and the translator Vairocana. The "Space Series" dwells upon the theme of the "mental sphere" (*klong*) rather than the mind itself, and teaches that nothing occurs outside the space of reality. The Space Series was also transmitted chiefly through Śrīsiṃha and Vairocana. Finally, the "Esoteric Instruction Series" was a relatively late syncretic literary movement, and is generally treated as representing the acme of Great Perfection philosophy. It refers primarily to the textual cycles associated with the Seminal Heart Tradition such as the *Seminal Heart of the Ḍākinī (mkha' 'gro snying thig)* said to be transmitted through Padmasambhava, and the *Seminal Heart of Vimalamitra (bi ma snying thig)* connected with the great scholar Vimalamitra.

This tradition's views concern themselves with Reality that is free from notions of acceptance or rejection of either saṃsāra or nirvāṇa and that transcends the poles of either hope or fear. The tradition advocates the practice of "breakthrough" (*khregs chod*) meditation on the

primordial purity of the Reality's Expanse—i.e., the Ground—and the practice of "direct transcendence" (*thod rgal*) meditation on the spontaneous appearance—i.e., the path. Through these practices, the Self-Emergent Primordial Wisdom is said to manifest instantaneously. One etymology of the term "Great Perfection" (*rdzogs chen*) plays on the word "perfection" (*rdzogs*) in relation to the creation (*bskyed*) and perfection (*rdzogs*) stages usually associated with Mahāyoga and Anuyoga respectively.

Thus we find in the Ancient School's presentation of the Nine Vehicles employs a variety of rhetorical techniques to appeal to persons of varying temperments in its audience. The first three do not depart in any significant way from presentations of the Lesser and Great Vehicles as found in the Indian materials. These presentations are characterized by rhetoric of individualism in the former, and rhetoric of universality in the latter. The next three vehicles again do not depart significantly from tantric materials disseminated in other Indian and Tibetan schools. These traditions employ various rhetorics of personal relationships by using language to evoke moods of servitude, friendship, desire, and so forth. Finally, in the last three vehicles we find truly distinctive rhetorical strategies peculiar to the Nyingma School, particularly those of the Mahāyoga and Great Perfection traditions, which are characterized by violent, shocking imagery in the former, and naturalistic rhetoric in the latter.

GREAT PERFECTION COSMOGONY

The entire Great Perfection project of enlightenment, and hence much of the language employed in its textual tradition, is intimately bound up with the tradition's followers' understanding of the origin of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Adherents of Great Perfection essentially characterize these two as sharing a common basis with the metaphor of the "ground," out of which a false duality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa bifucates. Becoming enlightened according the Great Perfection view, then, is merely a process of recognition of this common origin and the underlying purity of all appearances, and hence common Buddhist metaphors of "effort," "modification," or "contrivance" (*bcos*) do not apply at all. It is said to transcend existence and non-existence, and to be beyond intellectual or linguistic expression, a classic apophatic rhetorical maneuver. This primordial ground has always been perfect and complete (*rdzogs*), so nothing more was needed, and tantric terms such as "enlightening mind" (*byang chub sems*) and

"self-emergent primordial wisdom" (*rang byung ye shes*) are also used to designate this same spiritual basis.[15]

Great Perfection cosmogonic narratives begin and end with a rhetorical evocation of the "ground" (*gzhi*), a term that literally means foundation or basis, but also suggests a cause, seed, root, origin, and so forth. The ground of all existence is characterized as being a primordially pure essence (*ngo bo ka dag*), an absence (*med pa*) brimming with possibility (*'char gzhi*). Due to a "wavering" or "flow" (*g.yos pa*) of the wind or breath of primordial wisdom (*ye shes kyi rlung*), this potentiality takes shape as awareness automatically manifests or "self-presences" (*rang snang*) into all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

At the very moment of this emergence of awareness from the ground, by not mistaking these appearances as "other," but realizing them to be the natural radiance of the ground, these movements (*g.yos pa*) cease of themselves—delusions are dispelled and primordial wisdom is perfected. In this sense the ground, which is the origin of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, also becomes the final destination and resting place of these two, and in that sense is identified with enlightenment itself. This is also identified with the primodial Buddha All Good (skt. *samantabhadra*, tib. *kun tu bzang po*).

If one does not realize or recognize the essence of the ground's appearances for what they are, one mistakes them for something "other," and here the language of "deviation" or "straying" (*'khrul*) into saṃsāra and delusions is employed. This in turn leads to apprehending these appearances in dualistic terms, which then leads to emotional defilements such as attachment, hatred, jealousy, and so forth. Due to this lack of recognition, one is compelled to wander through the cycle of birth and death in states of increasingly coarse corporeality, which are governed by the laws of karma and cause and effect. Thus, the delusory appearances manifest as saṃsāra through the strength of karmic propensities (*bag chags*) of not recognizing the true nature of those appearances, and rather apprehending them in terms of self and other.

Nevertheless, despite the increasing rigidification of saṃsāra, the ground's fluidity and vibrancy remains latent within all sentient beings. This is described as the "enlightened nucleus" or the "Buddha nature" (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po*) present in the background of all life and which is possible to tap into, no matter how distorted or habituated one becomes.[16] Longchenpa explains how it is possible for the fluctuations of awareness to give rise to both

saṃsāra and nirvāṇa through an analysis of all phenomena, whether of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, being the "playfulness" (rol pa), "dynamism" (rtsal), and "embellishment" (rgyan) of awareness:

> Dynamism is the capacity of awareness, and thus it appears individually as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa like the appearance of a single ray of sunlight opening a lotus and closing up a water lily. As for the playfulness [of awareness], it is the playfulness in terms of the radiance of awareness just like the way a butter lamp plays in its light, and the sun plays in its rays. Ornamentation is how the naturally dawning essence of awareness is adorned when its self-presencing lights up in arrays, just as the sky adorned by rainbows, the sun, the moon, the planets, and stars.[17]

Here again, the sun is awareness (*rig pa*) and its rays are its dynamism. Just as one ray of sunlight can open and close lotuses and water lilies respectively, so awareness' dynamism can activate both daylight (nirvāṇa) or night-time (saṃsāra). Awareness is the pure potential, dynamism is the capacity of that potential and as the space takes shape, it creates a field, and the playfulness (*rol pa*) is the activity within that field, i.e., the pure and impure saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Dynamism initiates the process of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and ornamentation (*rgyan*) is the elaboration of maṇḍalas, and so forth.[18]

This fundamental theory is already evident in early works belonging to the ninth century or earlier in texts from the *18 Mind Series Tantras* including *The Cuckoo of Awareness Tantra (rig pa'i khu byug)*.[19] In works dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries such as Nub Sangyay Yeshay (*gnub sangs rgyas ye shes*, ca. 832-943) *The Lamp Eye of Concentration (bsam gtan mig sgron)* and Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo's (*rong zom chos kyi bzang po*, ca. eleventh century) *Entrance to the Way of the Great Vehicle (theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa)* this doctrine becomes more developed and refined taking a more definite form.[20] In the fourteenth century, Longchenpa himself further elaborated and developed this theme in his important work, *The Treasury of Words and Meanings (tshig don mdzod)*.[21]

In this scheme, not only is the "Great Perfection" the culmination of the highest forms of tantric praxis, it even surpasses them. In fact, early Great Perfection literature is characterized by rhetorical denials of the relevance and validity of either of these two related practices, as well as other normative tantric categories such as the ten natures (*rang bzhin bcu*) articulated in

the lower tantras. Mahāyoga tantras such as the *Secret Nucleus Tantra (rgyud gsang ba'i snying po, guhyagarbhatantra)* propound such traditional tantric principles as philosophical views (*lta ba*), meditation (*bsgom pa*), conduct (*spyod pa*), and so forth. Great Perfection literature (especially of the Mind Series class), on the other hand, rejects these categories, stating instead that there is *no* view, *no* meditation, and so forth.

The irony of these rhetorical denials of advanced tantric practices is that, from one point of view, Great Perfection is intended only for those who have already completed these tantric processes with their complex meditations and rituals. So the Great Perfection as a system thus claims to possess unmediated access to reality that no other school or practice can provide. Indeed, in general works such as Dudjom Rinpoche's *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, the first discussion of Atiyoga/Great Perfection as such is couched in a curious mixture of mystical apophatic language on the one hand, and harsh polemic on the other. This juxtaposition between the tendency to make claims to immediacy by deprecating language and attacking other scholastic or "dialectical" traditions with polemical rhetoric creates an interesting and creative tension raising complex issues concerning the relation of experience and scholastics. The following passage from the root verses of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* describing the superiority of Atiyoga over all the other vehicles, for example, shifts seamlessly between these two rhetorical maneuvers:

> Immature beings tricked by absence,[22] like wild deer
> Whose thirst impels them to chase after water of a mirage,
> Long for meaning[23] in the words of mistaken jargon, and hence
> The doctrines of individual tenet systems bind them up in an ontic status of
>   phenomena.[24]
> Since the eight stages [i.e., the lower vehicles] do not eliminate the pitfalls of
>   intellectualism,
> They lack the vision of the pristine state—the nucleus of all that is meaningful.[25]

In this passage, Longchenpa artfully juxtaposes a literary yet trenchant critique of what he perceives to be the excessive emphasis on doctrinal explanation utilized in competing schools of thought in which he likens their followers to children, and their doctrines to mere jargon with a "pristine vision" that is nothing less than the core of all that is meaningful.

Great Perfection literature is greatly concerned with describing direct and immediate experiences of unadorned reality. Paradoxically, however, in order to describe an experience that is by definition ineffable, such literature must resort to the use of paradox and other negative or "apophatic" language which itself disparages language. On the other hand, at times this negative rhetoric of the Great Perfection rhetoric becomes a demonization of dialectical and scholastic discourse, together with scholars and others who abide by artificial, contrived rules and laws. This contentious feature of Great Perfection diction reveals it's a fundamentally parasitic quality—rather than put forward any A systematic presentation of either philosophy or spiritual practice, it is often content to deconstruct the seemingly coherent systems of the "lower" vehicles. Hence, in many respects, the Great Perfection is an attack discourse, an ephemeral meta-critique that feeds on its hosts. This quality of Great Perfection discourse is peculiar in the sense that, although it seems to describe them, many of its texts in fact present no system of philosophy or technical meditation, but rather almost exist in a pure rhetorical space. We might even go so far as to claim that the strongly rhetorical and literary flavor to Great Perfection texts in some sense enabled their Tibetan authors to care about literature as literature, even though there may have been a tacit prohibition or suspicion against such purely aesthetic enjoyments in a specifically soteriological literary context. This is because in some sense its very ephemerality guarded them against the tainted love of literature. Couching the language used in these poetic works in terms of "emptiness" and its similes permits those Tibetan intellectuals who would otherwise be constrained against aesthetic expressions of this kind to freely exhibit a whole world of allegories, symbols, and tropes of all kinds. Thus, while recognizing that the negative rhetoric for which the Great Perfection is justifiably famous was often linked to real practices (often, even as it rhetorically denied them), here I wish to emphasize the *literary* nature of the Great Perfection. Hence, despite its claims to total immediacy and no concern for anything but direct experience, in fact the Great Perfection was a very literary tradition with a great love of literature.

INVENTORY OF RDZOGS CHEN RHETORIC

In order to understand the literary characteristics of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, it is necessary to briefly overview the key rhetorical strategies employed in Great Perfection literature. Although Great Perfection has earned the reputation of being primarily concerned

with unmediated access to unadorned reality, the literature is in fact quite diverse, dealing with a variety of themes and issues, ranging from aphorisms to technical discussions of meditative practices. As David Germano states: "It is essential to keep in mind that the Great Perfection was not at all a monolithic tradition, but rather ...consisted of a wide variety of heterogeneous movements with often quite different sources and agendas."[26] Thus, while I will try to address the majority of the major literary trends encompassed by the term "Great Perfection," I necessarily concentrate on the principal sources and literary corpora upon which Longchenpa draws in his composition of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. In this discussion I will be using "rhetoric" in the first sense of the definition I gave in an earlier chapter, i.e., rhetoric as literary style and as persuasion. The Great Perfection has many literary genres including technical discussions on meditation, ritual, and so forth. Here, however, I focus on the earliest strata of Great Perfection literature and how it continued right into *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* as a form of discourse that resisted any specific technical discussions of religious praxis, unlike some later forms of the tradition.

Perhaps the most characteristic feature of Great Perfection rhetoric is its tendency to negate or subvert standard Buddhist tropes, as well as to invert normative Buddhist polarities and hierarchies. Critics have seemed anxious to suggest that Great Perfection traditions are beyond the pale not only of Buddhist tantra, but also of Buddhism itself because of this pronounced negative rhetoric. As influential and prominent as this negative or "apophatic" rhetoric is, however, it is in fact complemented by an equally strong *positive* rhetoric of the indwelling primordial wisdom (*ye shes*) or awareness (*rig pa*). Certain noteworthy tropes, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies peculiar to this body of literature elaborate on these twin themes. For instance, we encounter a general fascination with origins and primordiality expressed with terms such as "primordial" (*ye nas*), "primeval" (*gdod ma*), "initial" (*dang po'i*), and "original" (*thog ma*). Great Perfection discourse ridicules those who search for "Buddha" outside of themselves, asserting rather that one need only recognize one's own indwelling primordial identity. Related to this emphasis on origins is the development of the characteristic Great Perfection trope of the "ground" (*gzhi* or *gzhi ma*). The ground or origin out of which we emerge is also our ultimate destination, and in fact is the place where we reside in the meantime as our own fundamental identity. This emphasis on "self" provides an interesting contrast to and development of the traditional Buddhist rhetoric of "selflessness," and is reflected in frequently

found terms such as "one's own bed" (*rang mal*), "one's own place" (*rang sa*), "own's own face" (*rang ngo*) and so forth. The emphasis on origins is also linked to the notion of potentiality in the sense that the primordial origins from which both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa emerge are rhetorically associated with *absence* (*med pa*) of structure rather than presence of any kind. This sense of potentiality is sometimes expressed with metaphors of light such as "inner radiance" (*nang gsal*), "glow" (*mdangs*), and "dynamism" (*rtsal*). Potentiality is often described in terms of "balance," "sameness," "equality" (*mnyam pa nyid*), "non-differentiation" (*dbyer med*), "singularity" (*gcig, nyag gcig*) or "unity" (*gcig pu*). It may also be described in terms of the "absence of periphery or center" (*mtha' dbus med*), the "absence of fragmentation" (*ris su med pa*), or the "absence of polarization" (*phyogs ris med pa*). Other tropes commonly found in Great Perfection discourse include terms that valorize open space (*klong, nam mkha'*), wandering (*rgya yan, phyogs yan, rang yan*, and so forth), and freedom from effort and control (*'bad rtsol med pa*). These in turn suggest an emphasis on relaxation (*ngal gso*) and release or letting go (*cog bzhag*), as opposed to stressed-out goal-oriented activities.

Other significant rhetorical strategies in terms of their impact on *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* are the juxtaposition of "nature" (*rang bzhin*) and "artifice" (*bcos pa*), and the subversion of normative Buddhist ethical concerns such as "karmic cause and effect" (*las rgyu 'bras*), tantric commitments (*dam tshig*), and so forth. The terms "nature" (*rang bzhin*) and "natural" (*rang gis, ngang gis*, and so forth) pervade almost all strata of Great Perfection literature, and are often contrasted with terms connoting contrivance, effort, striving, and so on. Additionally, one finds great emphasis placed on the transcendence of conventional notions of ethics. Hence, the Great Perfection is said to be "beyond virtue and sin" (*dge sdig las 'das pa*), "beyond cause and effect" (*rgyu 'bras las 'das pa*), and, in a Nietzchean turn, "beyond good and evil" (*bzang ngan las 'das pa*). As we shall see, these are very prominent themes in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*.

RHETORIC IN THE TREASURY OF ABIDING REALITY

We now turn to a discussion of the actual language of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* and its possible rhetorical implications. Drawing on this rich literary tradition with all of its devices, similes, analogies, and so forth, Longchenpa fashioned *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* explicitly as a contemplative and philosophical work, but implicitly as a rhetorical response to his own specific set of historical, cultural, and biographical circumstances. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*

draws primarily on citations from two major currents of Great Perfection thought, the Mind Series (*sems sde*), and the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*), and its principal feature is its conservative mode of discourse that rhetorically negates all forms of religious praxis. The underlying structure of the text, as mentioned, is composed of the four tantric commitments (skt. *samaya*, tib. *dam tshig*) of absence (*med pa*), simplicity (*phyal pa*), spontaneity (*lun grub*), and unity (*gcig bu*). Each of these four rubrics are further divided into four categories of "indictment" (*gnad bkrol*, literally "laying bare the key facts"), "arrest" (*'gag bsdams*, literally "confining within the nexus"), "binding into fetters" (*'chings su bcing ba*), and "crossing the pass" (*la zla ba*). This final term has the extended meaning of "to determine," "to resolve," "to decide," or even perhaps "to pass judgment." Hence, although it does not have an explicit legal connotation, it certainly could be interpreted in that context. The whole body of the work is structured around these sixteen categories, and the latter group of four terms is used repeatedly within each section. Furthermore, the second set of four applies to the first group of four such that one is "confined" within "absence," "indicted" within "spontaneity," and so forth. The word "commitment" (*dam tshig*) here is a term commonly found in tantric literature to refer to the esoteric pledges tantric initiates promise to uphold. In this context, however, the pledges or commitments Longchenpa urges the reader to uphold paradoxically require no particular effort to protect—on the contrary, to exert any effort in the observance of these precepts would be to transgress them. Indeed, just how does one "cultivate" or "exert oneself in" such abstractions as absence, simplicity, or spontaneity? In using absence and so forth as the very *structure* of the text, Longchenpa engages in a subtle polemic against what he sees as the contrivance and artificiality of normative tantric rules and practices associated with both the "Modernist" movement (*gsar ma*), and the Mahāyoga system of his own tradition. Moreover, he suggests that we must indeed abide by the "rules" (*dam tshig*), but that these rules are not man-made artifices, but are more like the "rules of the game," i.e., how things *are*.

It is not difficult to understand how such deliberate appropriation of specific terms from *The Seventeen Tantras* deployed in this context could be construed as functioning on a rhetorical level. As mentioned just above, the four principal categories are further divided into four each. These subdivisions are (1) "revealing the key point" or "indict" (*gnad bkrol*), (2) "confining within the nexus" (*'gag tu bsdams pa*), (3) "binding in fetters" (*chings su bcing ba*), and (4) "passing judgment" (*la bzla ba*). Hence, Longchenpa admonishes the reader to "indict" all

phenomena as absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and solitariness, and so forth. This leads to the paradoxical and somewhat counterintuitive situation of finding oneself "confined within the nexus" of simplicity, or "bound in the shackles" of spontaneity. What does it feel like to be chained with spontaneity? Aren't things like absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and unity supposed to *release* us from social strictures? Again Longchenpa appears to be playing off the strict language of the tantric injunction to guard assiduously one's esoteric commitments by mischievously juxtaposing these concepts. The contemporary Tibetan lama Tulku Thondup interprets these paradoxical pledges in the following way:

> Meditators who have realized the true meaning of Dzogpa Chenpo and who are progressing through the higher stages of Dzogpa Chenpo realization do not need to observe any discipline, as it will only restrict and condition their minds and actions. These meditators have already transcended mundane concepts of duality and afflicting emotions. For them, there is no self to project and no self to grasp at or cherish. Whatever they say or do becomes a sourse of ultimate peace and benefit for others and themselves. Remaining in the four disciplineless disciplines is the discipline.[27]

Herbert Guenther suggests how these may be described in terms of judicial proceedings: After the charges have been laid (*gnad bkrol*), an arrest is made (*'gag bsdams*), the prisoner is handcuffed (*chings su bcing ba*), and, finally, the sentence is passed (*la bzla ba*).[28] Guenther's strong readings of these terms are especially evocative when considered in light of Longchenpa's documented conflict with Jangchup Gyaltsen, the era's leading proponent of legalistic discourse. Here it must be stipulated that, while extremely evocative, none of these terms is found in Tibetan legal literature. Nevertheless, given Longchenpa's experiences vis-à-vis Jangchup Gyaltsen and his well documented observations on the conditions in central Tibet in the mid-to-late 1350s, he may well have been using these pseudo-legalistic metaphors as an ironic comment on the mania for establishing law and order so prevalent at the time.

The four major topics of absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and unity, each with its respective four subdivisions, comprise the skeletal structure of the text, which is then fleshed out with other thematic elaborations. Longchenpa concentrates on groups of paired opposites, privileging one component over the other. Among the more notable of these oppositions are those of (1)

space versus boundaries, (2) law and order versus spontaneity, (3) relaxation versus stress, (4) nature versus contrivance, and (5) scholars versus non-scholars. Space is probably the single most important analogy employed in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. It stands for the unconditioned nature of reality, and for enlightening mind (*bodhicitta, byang chub kyi sems*) itself. Like space, the enlightening mind (variously known as "awareness," "self-emergent primordial wisdom," and "mind-as-such") is open, vast, free from boundaries, and all embracing. As such, it provides a striking contrast to images of limits, boundaries, fixed enclosures, and so forth.

As will be discussed below, one of the text's most striking images is that of the great *Khyung* bird, apparently an amalgamation of the *garuḍa* of Indian mythology and a Tibetan mythical bird. This creature, which stands for Great Perfection Ati-yoga, is so powerful and dynamic that it bursts through the confines of the casing of its egg by merely spreading its wings. It soars in space without constraints, and is able to assay everything below from its lofty view. Hence, it is reasonable to infer that the passages argue for an alternative vision of religious praxis, and against the increasing centralization of the emerging social and religious institutions.

Transcendence of mundane ethical concerns is another crucial theme developed in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. In glaring contrast to normative doctrinal interpretation, Longchenpa insists on rhetorically negating the ethical norms of virtue and vice (*dge sdig*) as well as the implicit exertion (*'bad rtsol*) and implied causal basis (*rgyu 'bras*) such norms presuppose. In addition to the explicit denials of this ethical model, famous examples such as the absence of any benefit or retribution for the act of homicide are also cited. Another passage states that a person who has spent his or her life in pursuit of the ten virtues (*dge ba bcu*) has no better chance of accumulating the stores of merit and wisdom than does a mass-murderer. As an alternative vision to such a regulated environment, Longchenpa rhetorically evokes a world governed by nature (*rang bzhin*) and spontaneity (*lhun grub*) and the explicit absence of activities predicated on the principle of cause and effect. His dismissal of ethical notions of virtue and vice, good and evil amounts to a total rejection of the Buddhist concept of the *Ten Virtues* that provided the theoretical underpinning for almost all Tibetan legal codes, including the Neudong (*ne'u gdong*) code attributed to Jangchub Gyaltsen.[29] Hence, such rhetorical attacks on ethical conventions may be construed as a form of critique against the excessive emphasis

placed on rules and regulations in the emerging ethos of both the religious and political spheres.

Following from this denial of the efficacy of moral behavior, Longchenpa argues at length for benefits of "relaxation" (*ngal gso*) or "letting go" (*cog bzhag*), "resting" (*bzhag pa*), "freedom" (*grol ba*), and so forth. These terms are frequently combined with negations of words denoting all sorts of effort such as "striving" (*'bad pa*), "exertion" (*rtsol ba*), and "purposive activities" (*bya ba*). The reason it is not necessary to do anything or go anywhere is because everything happens naturally (*rang bzhin gyis*), and requires no fabrication. We are always already at our ultimate destination, our "own place" (*rang sa*), the warmth of our "own bed" (*rang mal*). These are but a very few of the terms to which the particle "self" (*rang*) is affixed to denote a "natural" quality. This theme of "naturalness" clearly resists the emerging monastic paradigm with its emphasis on *vinaya* (*'dul ba*, "discipline"), while the emphasis on "self" undermines the authority of "others" to judge or punish.

Finally, let us consider the rhetorical juxtaposition of the figures of the "scholar" (*mkhas pa*) and the "idiot" (*glen pa*). As the sheer volume of his writings attests, Longchenpa himself was a great scholar. Moreover, his intellectual orientation was clearly influenced by the six years he spent at Sangphu Neutok (*gsang phu ne'u thog*), the preeminent institution for the study of logic and epistemology in Tibet at the time. We can discern this influence even in a text as far removed from the world of syllogism and consequence as *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, when Longchenpa embarks on an extended discussion of the difference between "mind" (*sems*) and "mind-as-such" (*sems nyid*). Even with this significant background in philosophical argumentation forming Longchenpa as a scholar, he still finds reasons to rhetorically attack the scholastic mindset while valorizing more marginal figures. In one passage, for instance, he warns his readers to avoid the "cage of intellectualism" (*sgrin po'i gzed*) and advises them to "relax into the uncontrived mindset of a fool" (*ma bcos glen snang la lhod pa*).[30] Another important attack on traditional notions of scholasticism comes in a passage where he unabashedly champions the position of Ha-shang Mahāyāna, the purported representative for the Chinese school of "sudden" enlightenment in the famous "debate" at Samye (*bsam yas*) in the late eighth century.[31] A statement of this type clearly flies in the face of normative Tibetan accounts of the outcome of this highly publicized "debate," such as those of Sakya Paṇḍita (*sa skya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal mtshan*, 1182-1251) and others. Longchenpa's evocation of this highly

marginal figure is nothing less than a rhetorical provocation aimed at the ideology of the "gradual path" (*lam rim*) and the monastic and political institutions based upon it.

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN THE TREASURY OF ABIDING REALITY

Like all authors, Longchenpa utilizes the resources at his command to make the greatest impact on his readers, and many of his strategies are familiar ones. As argued in a previous chapter, applying rhetorical categories from one tradition to the literature of another is a problematic, and rhetoric is a slippery term in any event. In addition, as I mentioned in Chapter Two, Tibetans have their own vocabulary for literary criticism derived primarily from the Indian Aesthetic tradition. Nevertheless, as George Kennedy points out, to the extent that all human beings engage in purposive activities that involve persuasion, "rhetoric" is a universal phenomenon.[32] It is in this spirit, then, that in this section I will attempt to analyze some of the basic rhetorical maneuvers Longchenpa employs throughout *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*.

The basic structure of his own commentary to *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is Longchenpa's prose explanation of the inspirational verses of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* itself. Thus, Longchenpa interprets the subject matter of his shorter poetic work by providing the reader of the larger explanatory work with prose glosses of the individual verses, which are often more opaque. He also provides larger subject-headings into which the groups of verses fall, thus making the overarching topic of any given section of the work explicit. To further illustrate the significance or context to the discussion of any given passage, Longchenpa cites copiously from the canonical literature of the Nyingma School, particularly the Great Perfection Tantras included in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*. In so doing, Longchenpa often demonstrates not only his remarkable erudition in the vast literature of his tradition, but gives a glimpse into the passages that may have inspired him to write the relevant verses in his own work. A typical example of this tendency to emphasize his own point through citation of authoritative scriptural passages is found in the following example. In his own "root" (*rtsa ba*) verses, Longchenpa delineates the basic structure of his text:

> The final meaning of the essence of the mind, space, and esoteric precepts series
> resides in the four,
> Absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and solitariness,
> Each of which has four: indictment, confinement, binding,

And passing judgement.[33]

This short verse provides the basis for the entire underlying structure of both the root verses and the commentary of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Still, Longchenpa is concerned that readers understand that these categories or rubrics are not merely his own inventions, but that they are derived from traditional authoritative sources. Hence, he uses the following passage from *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)* (among others) to rationalize his use of this concept of the four "esoteric precepts" (*dam tshig*):

At that time, the commitments which transcend the limitations of protection
Become catalysts for that [visionary yogi] by way of
The great spontaneity,
Absence, solitariness, and simplicity.[34]

Having established the authenticity and legitimacy of this rubric through this and similar citations, he can then move on to further refine his particular take on these precepts through further scriptural interpretation.

The practice of providing citations to substantiate one's claims is a familiar one in the Western academic tradition, and in a sense should not shock or surprise us since this is nothing more than careful scholarship. However, it is also useful to bear in mind, as Hopkins, Germano, Lopez and others have pointed out, that creativity and individuality are not considered virtues in most of Tibetan intellectual discourse. Even the most influential thinkers in Tibetan history have felt constrained to disavow any creative contribution to the intellectual traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, preferring instead to portray themselves as merely "elucidating" the true meaning or intent of some earlier infallible being. This prevailing cultural prejudice has meant that authors adopt the rhetorical position that they are doing no more than bringing to light correct interpretations. Hence, even brilliant innovative thinkers such as Longchenpa are careful to couch their insights in the precise terminology of the various traditions in which they were educated. The resulting writings often convey the impression of being little more than pious rehearsals of revered texts of the past, and in fact it is fair to characterize many Tibetan religious writings as exactly that. Nevertheless, certain pivotal figures, or as Harold Bloom might call them "strong poets," during the course of Tibetan intellectual history have been able to overcome the oppressive influence of all those thinkers who have preceded them to craft their

own unique contribution to the intellectual discourse of the day.[35] This is usually achieved through creative interpretation and close reading of the scriptural sources from the tradition, and this is precisely what Longchenpa is doing in the present work. Understanding these constraints under which Longchenpa and others were obliged to deal with helps the reader appreciate the underlying reasons for the implicit rhetorical, hermeneutical and ideological stance vis-á-vis the received tradition. Thus, while Longchenpa is greatly bound by and to traditional expectations of scholarship, he nevertheless is able use his rhetorical acumen to articulate innovative opinions and use the traditional materials to serve his own ends.

A common maneuver of Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is addition of seemingly superfluous words or **pleonasm.** The tendency to be verbose and copious in one's use of redundant or synonymous expressions may strike the modern reader as poor writing style, especially since we are taught in school to be brief and to the point in our writing. We know we have a pleonasm when we can eliminate words without changing the meaning of a sentence or phrase. Although pleonasm may stray into the realm of redundancy, under ideal circumstances its sheer superabundance of word and expressions will serve to strengthen the conclusions towards which an author or speaker is pushing the reader.

Longchenpa has only a few major themes that he emphasizes in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, and one of the most significant ways he presses his points is through sheer repetition and paraphrase. For example, he will raise an issue in his root verses, restate the point in prose form immediately following the verse citation, and then support his assertion with a barrage of quotations from scripture. This strategy is so integral to his style that he utilizes it immediately at the beginning of the text when commenting on the obligatory "homage" section found in nearly all Buddhist texts.

Initially, Longchenpa cites the homage itself from his own root verses:

> I prostrate to the glorious All Good![36]

From one point of view, this statement is a straightforward and unproblematic obeisance to the primordial Buddha known as "All Good" (*kun tu bzang po, samantabhadra*) particularly revered in Great Perfection traditions. As such, it could easily stand as an adequate fulfillment of the traditional requirement for a expression of reverence (*phyag 'tshal ba*). But, given that the present work is a *commentary* (*'grel ba*), to do so would represent a transgression of the genre's

stylistic conventions whereby every word and every line must be repeated, expanded, and explicated. Thus, Longchenpa immediately follows this with a more elaborate verse rendering of the same sentiment:

> To the openness in which all the spontaneous enlightened qualities are
> primordially and perfectly complete,
> To the Primordial Savior who has become the glory of saṁsāra and nirvāṇa,
> To the Victor, the Dharma-lord who embodies awareness, the Lama,
> I bow down with the unfolding thousand-petalled lotus of a hundred-fold faith.

Here Longchenpa tells us a little more about the Buddha All Good. It is hard to know whether the intended audience of Tibetan intellectuals and meditators find the description of a Buddha as being "openness" as arresting an image as we might. Discussions of the "three bodies" (*sku gsum*) of the Buddha were commonplace throughout Mahāyāna literature, and were no doubt very familiar to Longchenpa's readership, but even so but the tension and incongruity between the semantic impact conveyed by "Buddha" on the one hand, and "openness" on the other is still striking.

ADHORTIO

Adhortio is a commandment, promise, or exhortation intended to move one's consent or desires. Longchenpa utilizes this category primarily in the opening and closing sections of the text. However, this hardly represents a unique or particularly creative expression or departure from literary norms for Tibetan Buddhist compositions. It is a common practice in both Indian and Tibetan Buddhist religious literature for authors, particularly of philosophical treatises (*bstan bcos*) to include in their prefatory remarks a "promise" or "pledge" to compose the text (*brtsom par dam bca' ba*). In *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* Longchenpa devotes an entire section to this topic, complete with elaborate scripural citations and the *exordium* (discussed below), the gist of his pledge to compose the text is fairly straightforward and terse:

> I accept the promise that, "For the sake of later generations, I will teach the meaning well realized through the grace of the holy Guru." Thus, since I here point out the mind-as-such, transcendent of causal networks driven by striving and accomplishment, which is not realized by the lower spiritual vehicles, I teach that

> you are pure without abandoning or remaining within any deviation and/or obscuration, and that all phenomena are to be realized as mere arbitrary designations (*ming tsam*).[37]

This passage is immediately followed by a quotation illustrating the essential purity of the mind-as-such, after which Longchenpa briefly reiterates and elaborates upon his promise:

> Through beginning the subject with words that teach these topics, I was thinking of the benefit whereby those persons with the greatest acumen would become liberated in just this way. Just as I vowed above, without wavering at all, I will teach these subjects for the purpose of bringing this composition to its culmination.

Thus, Longchenpa willingly accepts the burden of revealing the profound meaning of the scriptures so that persons of highest spiritual aptitude will be able to attain liberation, a feat achieved through introducing them to their own primordial identities.

In addition to the literary convention of making a "promise" to compose the text at hand, it is also a common literary practice in these traditions for the author to admonish and exhort his or her readers sincerely to integrate the principles conveyed into their daily lives, and to guard the secrets disclosed in the text with their lives. In general, it is a common rhetorical practice in both the Ancient and Modern schools of Tibetan Buddhism to discourage the free dissemination of any tantric teachings. None but the most advanced or elite practitioners are to be shown these spiritual "treasures," and to do so would be to place them and also oneself at grave risk. Indeed, Longechenpa devotes an entire chapter to the topic of suitable candidates for the esoteric instructions embodied in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in which he uses verse, commentary, and scriptural citation to caution against freely circulating these materials. He states in his own root verses:

> In that way, other than to persons of certain intelligence and fortune,
> The heart-essence of the exceedingly profound vehicle
> Should not be taught to those on the inferior vehicles, or who are addicted to
> causality,
> Nor to narrow-minded people of little fortune.[38]

Longchenpa then expatiates on his own brief verses with a more prosaic treatment in his commentary, employing the rhetorical strategy of *amplification* by explaining in greater detail the faults of revealing these secret instructions:

> Even if you were to teach the profound to those of inferior fortune, they would not realize it. Since it does not fit inside the heads of narrow-minded people, they end up abandoning the doctrine. Since those on the lower vehicles are addicted to their own philosophical systems, they generate wrong-views. Since those who are addicted to doctrines of causation always comprehend everything only through karma and cause and effect, even if you teach them the sky-like doctrine, they view it as a topic about which to argue, exaggerate or deprecate. Therefore, since they are not suitable candidates, it is taught that you must keep this unsurpassed doctrine secret.[39]

People whose minds are not suitably prepared to understand these subtle doctines should not be taught since to do so would actually create obstacles to their eventual understanding. Finally, in a manner stylistically consistent with the rest of the text, Longchenpa supports his assertions through citing a series of authoritative scriptures, one of which is from the *Heap of Jewels Tantra*:

> You must not express even the slightest part of these words among those such as Hearers and Solitary Realizers! If you ask why that is, it is because they become nervous and scared, and finally they pass out due to hearing all these words. They have no faith in [doctrines of] Secret Mantra—having given rise to this frame of mind they experience the great hells of sentient beings due to the ripening of that karma. Therefore, by teaching or even by hearing,[40] no propogation of the view should be expressed at all even in a mere gust of wind.[41]

This passage provides little more descriptive detail on the deleterious effects of sharing this privileged information with people who are not ready to hear it—they become anxious, they pass out, they lose their faith, and finally, they are reborn in the hells.

APODIOXIS

Apodioxis is the rejection of something or someone (usually an adversary's argument) as being irrelevant, false, or wicked. This relates to the strategies of contradiction or refutation. Refutation is an attack on an opposite view, typically attacking the credibility of a myth or legend. Attack the credibility of a myth or legend employing these steps: 1. Blame the teller of the story, 2. Give a summary of the story, or 3. Attack it as being: obscure, incredible, impossible, illogical, unfitting, or unprofitable.

In this context, Longchenpa is in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* most often engaged in the rejection of *arguments* rather than myths or legends. However, given the text's overall rhetorical rejection of traditional Buddhist categories such as cause and effect (*rgyu 'bras*), production and cessation (*skye 'gag*), and so forth, one might suggest that Longchenpa views these seemingly "rational" analyses as little more than "myths" or "fictions," at least in the context of the ultimate teaching, the Great Perfection. At any rate, the tendency of the text to deprecate categories such as these rhetorically is in itself a rejection of them as being false or irrelevant. In general the text categorically rejects these notions rather than employing logical argumentation, such as Longchenpa's root verse illustrates:

> The actual enlightened nucleus, i.e., the self-emergent primordial gnosis,
> Is devoid of causal networks, and hence the abyss of cyclic existence is eliminated;
> It is devoid of good and bad, and hence saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are easily equalized;
> It is devoid of deviation and obscuration, and hence the three existences are
> definitively settled.[43]

Longchenpa makes no attempt to prove his own position, nor to disprove the position of the opponents. Rather, using the device of *apophasis* (i.e., the assertion of something by pointedly seeming to pass over, ignore, or deny it), he simply states the facts as he sees them in what amounts to an appeal to something beyond our usual cognitive or linguistic spheres. Longchenpa then amplifies on this point:

> Within the essence of transparent (*zang ka*), radiant, and raw (*rjen pa)* awareness there are no fabricated causal networks, and thus falling into cyclic existence and the abyss of pleasure and pain are eradicated from the beginning. Saṃsāra in its

> entirety emerges from the unimpeded mode of appearance of cause and effect and yet, since cause and effect are not at all present within our own face—awareness—there is no deviation, no obscuration, no ethical considerations of good or bad. Hence, however saṃsāra and nirvāṇa may deceptively appear, within the essence of awareness they are equalized in a stress-free environment. Since you no longer experience them as existing in fact, your mind becomes relaxed and at ease. Within the range of awareness that is nowhere (nothing) at all, though it seems like phenomena are arising and abiding, not being experienced as presence, they are primordially free ("fallen away"). You merely remain directly within the realization of just that primordial freedom, and by way of that you superimpose this as buddhahood but in fact it is not at all the case that you have gone to the positive dimension because you have never wavered from your own space-like natural disposition in the first place![45]

Emphasizing again the *absence* of ethical norms and the principle of cause and effect upon which they are based, Longchenpa embellishes his earlier, more terse rejection of the normative categories of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa with an appeal to *experience*, to the absence of stress and the primordial freedom such absence suggests.

Although the bulk of the rejections of standard Buddhist concepts and practices in this text take the form of these apophatic strategies, it is well to recall that Longchenpa himself was schooled in the art of philosophical argumentation that was in the process of becoming the dominant form of religious discourse in Tibet at that time. Thus, at certain times in the course of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* Longchenpa shifts voices from the aphoristic, almost poetic flavor of the text that employs metaphor, analogy, and so forth, to a more syllogistic cast. Probably the most prominent example of this sort of rejection employing logical reasoning is found in the passage that differentiates between "mind" (*sems*) and "mind-as-such" (*sems nyid*), a key distinction in the Great Perfection tradition. Thus, regarding the assertion by some scholars that all appearances are "mind," Longchenpa replies that if that were the case, then

> ...it [absurdly] follows that the mind would manifest colors and polarized parts because the appearances themselves have colors and polarized parts. And since it would [absurdly] follow that the mind is external and appearances are inside, they

> both would become confused with each other. And it [absurdly] follows that, at the time of one's own death, the environment and the beings therein would also die at the same time, and so forth.[46]

Here Longchenpa uses the logical device known as a "consequence" (*thal ba, prasanga*) in the philosophical tradition of Buddhism in India and Tibet to demonstrate the flaws of conflating the positions that all the appearances of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are "mind-only," as followers of the Mind Only School assert, or that they are the playfulness, dynamism, and ornamentation of awareness (*rig pa*), i.e., mind-as-such, as followers of Great Perfection assert.

ALLEGORY

An allegory is a sustained metaphor continued through whole sentences or even through a whole discourse. In the case of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality,* we find the systematic deployment of certain metaphors throughout. In fact, I suggest that the very structure of the text of which I have made so much earlier in this chapter, i.e., the paradoxical juxtaposition of images of absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and so forth, with images of judgement, bondage, and restraint. I have already alluded to what I consider may be the underlying personal and historical significance of Longchenpa's choice of metaphors in his structuring of the text, and I will pursue that line of thought in my final chapter. Be that as it may, the text's organizing structure based on the sixteen doctrinal categories (*chos kyi rnam grangs bcu drug*) is clearly an instance of metaphor(s) being sustained throughout an entire discourse.

In addition to this rather obvious example, we also find several instances of sustained use of metaphors that could easily be characterized as allegorical. Perhaps the most prominent example of this rhetorical practice in the text is the repeated use of the "khyung" metaphor as a means to express symbolically the characteristics of the Great Perfection practitioner or of the Great Perfection itself. The figure of the *khyung* is nearly always employed as part of a larger metaphorical complex centered on the "space" or the "sky" (*nam mkha'*) of reality. It is within this "space of reality" that the "khyung" bird soars freely and unobstructed and overwhelms lesser creatures as a result of its strength and dynamism. In the following example, Longchenpa first cites the following passage from the *Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol):*

> For example, the Great Garuḍa (*khyung chen*), king of the birds
> Subjugated (*zil gnon*) the nāgas straight from the darkness of the womb and

> Achieved his full extent by breaking through the interior of the egg with his wings,
> And, once free from the confines of the egg, eliminated even the external nets with the flapping of his wings—
> How could such comfort and ease be appropriate for other birds?
> It is appropriate for the Great Garuḍa himself who is at ease and comfortable in the sky.[47]

Longchenpa then offers his own summary of the import of this passage:

> Even though being bound by the confines of an egg, he subjugated the nāga beings, and by fully extending his wings was able to fly in the sky. Similarly, a yogic visionary also subjugates the lower eight vehicles by means of resting in the King of the Vehicles and, having eliminated the abyss of saṃsāra by means of one's realization, is able to move about in the sky of reality. Just as a bird can fly by becoming free from the confines of an egg, [a yogic visionary] becomes awakened through becoming free from the confines of the coarse body.

Thus we see how Longchenpa employs allegory through the systematic application of sustained metaphor. The rhetorical figure of *exemplum*, i.e., citing an example or using an illustrative story or fable to make a point, however, is far less common in this text.

ALLUSION

An allusion is a casual and brief reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event. Although Longchenpa does not employ allusion frequently in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, there is at least one instance where he does so. It is to the shadowy figure of Ha-shang Mahāyāna to whom Longchenpa briefly alludes in his explication of a short passage from *The Sky-Soaring Great Khyung* by Śrī Siṃha, discussed in some detail above. Ha-shang was allegedly the Chinese representative at the famous, although likely fictitious, "Samye Debate" in the late eighth century. It was this debate in which the king Trisong Detsen purportedly determined that the Indian model of "gradual enlightenment" (*rim gyis pa*) was more suitable for Tibetans than was the Chinese "sudden enlightenment" (*cig char ba*) model. The passage from Śrī Siṃha's

text is concerned with the manner in which ordinary activities and emotions hinder one's realizations:

> Without a ground, uncontrived and not relying on anything,
> Modifying the body and relaxing into luminosity bind one to appearances.
>
> If there is no impartial and unprejudiced mind,
> Mental investigation and debate restrain one from experiencing the way things are (*gnas lugs*).
>
> Without the confidence of resting in one's own bed, primordially free and devoid of all activities,
> One's heart's desire and temporary meditative experiences prevent one from having realizations.
>
> Without the key point of resting naturally without seeking anything,
> Dependence of scriptures concerning cause and effect obscure awareness.[48]

The point seems to be that without an organic and uncontrived awareness of the way things actually abide (*gnas lugs*), ordinary activities normally construed as spiritually efficacious will in reality lead one astray. This position would be controversial because it explicitly questions practices such as debate (*sgro*), mental investigation (*yid spyod*), meditative experience (*nyams*), physical techniques (*lus bcos*), and scriptures that teach the doctrine of cause and effect, all of which are highly valued in traditional Buddhist discourse. Although this passage is from a text attributed to Śrī Siṃha, Longchenpa associates it (or the positions expressed in it) to Ha-shang in his commentary:

> The Great Master Ha-shang [Mahāyāna] has stated [such], and therefore although at that time those with inferior intellects were unable to comprehend it, in fact it is still like that. This is kept secret from those in the lower vehicles because since they are unable to comprehend it, and hence they slander it, at which time, due to that karma, they fall into the unfortunate realms.[49]

The rhetorical evocation of Ḥa-shang Mahāyāna, a figure usually demonized in Tibetan religious histories and whose purported teachings were the object of harsh polemical attacks by

influential religious figures such as Sakya Paṇḍita, makes a very strong statement.[50] To take up the position of this marginal and largely maligned character in any public forum must have represented a not-so-subtle critique of the prevailing trends in almost all schools of Tibetan Buddhism at that time.

AMPLIFICATION

Amplification refers to the rhetorical practice of restatement with additional detail of words or expressions likely to be ignored or overlooked because of their bluntness or brevity. It thus allows one to call attention to, emphasize, and expand a word or idea to make sure the reader realizes its importance or centrality in the discussion. Amplification is one of the most important rhetorical strategies employed by nearly all Tibetan authors of religious or philosophical works, and Longchenpa is no exception. This practice of commenting on a terse passage or verse in a more prosaic rendering originated with Indian commentarial literature. This is the single most used rhetorical strategy within the commentary to *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Furthermore, one hardly need isolate specific examples, since at almost any given point in the text one finds oneself either in a concise statement drawn from the root verses, or in some form of amplification on those verses. We have already seen examples in which Longchenpa states the specific root verse that is to be commented upon, renders it in an expanded prose form, perhaps filling out the missing grammar or glassing obscure terms, and then cites passages from authoritative scripture in order to buttress his interpretation.

The following brief section (concerning all phenomena's lack of substance and characteristics), starting with the subject heading, followed with the root verse, continuing with a prose restatement, and concluded with a passage from scripture, illustrates the basic pattern of amplification that occurs throughout the text:

INDICATING ALL PHENOMENA IN AND AS THE ABSENCE OF THINGS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Of these I will first teach on the topic of absence.
The nature of absence is the emptiness of essence.
Within the great openness of the enlightening mind equal to the
extent of space,

Whatsoever appears is similarly devoid of inherent existence.

> The essence of awareness and all phenomena that shine forth within its sphere are primordially empty and devoid of identity, and thus all discursive elaborations are completely pacified and un-produced. It is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal)*:
>
> > Serene and insubstantial awareness
> > Is devoid of discursive elaboration, concrete things, and characteristics.

Although this particular example is somewhat truncated, it admirably serves the purpose of illustrating the pattern of amplification used in the text. Moreover, although missing here, Longchenpa often appends a summary or recapitulation of the points that have been made in a particular section as a way to conclude the discussion. This strategy bears a great similarity to *epicrisis*, the practice of quoting a certain passage, and then making comments upon it.

Longchenpa's practice of amplification includes several other sub-strategies such as repetition of clauses and phrases, repetition of ideas such as dwelling on or returning to one's strongest argument (*commoratio*), expressing a similar idea with different verbs in successive clauses (*disjunctio*), and persistent repetition of the same idea in much the same words (*epimone*). This can also include the use of synonyms, pleonasms, paraphrase, and appositive phrases.

The technical vocabulary of the Great Perfection is filled with more or less synonymous words, phrases and expressions that can be used interchangeably. For example, the ubiquitous term "Great Perfection" is glossed by a variety of expressions. These include the "Natural Great Perfection" (*rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po*), "the pinnacle of spiritual vehicles" (*theg pa'i rtse mo*), "the highest pinnacle of philosophical views" (*lta ba'i yang rtse*), "the king of the vehicles" (*theg pa'i rgyal po*), "the exceedingly profound vehicle" (*yang zab theg pa*), "the essential vehicle" (*snying po'i theg pa*), and "the supreme vehicle" (*theg mchog*). Other important terms such as "awareness" (*rig pa*) have several synonyms including "primordial wisdom" (*ye shes*), "self-emergent primordial wisdom" (*rang byung ye shes*), "enlightening mind" (*byang chub kyi sems*), "mind-as-such" (*sems nyid*), and so forth. An excellent illustration of Longchenpa's practice of stringing together (often synonymous) Great Perfection terms in a strategy of accumulation as a means of making a greater rhetorical impact is found in his introduction to the commentary:

> When the glorious All Good, having enlightened all phenomena into the primordial ground, dwells in the indestructible expanse in the manner of great equality, he turns the unsurpassed Dharma-wheel of definitive meaning. The supreme fruit of these turnings of the wheel is the great secret in which awareness, the enlightening mind, the Reality-gestalt, the suchness beyond affirmation and negation, transformation or change, is taught in direct immediacy as transcending causal networks driven by striving and accomplishment. This treatise entitled *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* summarizes the definitive and ultimate topics of that [secret].[51]

Thus we see how Longchenpa employs the use of successive, often synonymous, terms and phrases as a way of building to a climax and achieving the greatest impact.

ANALOGY

Analogy compares two things, which are alike in several respects, for the purpose of explaining or clarifying some unfamiliar or difficult idea or object by showing how the idea or object is similar to some familiar one. While simile and analogy often overlap, the simile is generally a more artistic likening, done briefly for effect and emphasis, while analogy serves the more practical end of explaining a thought process or a line of reasoning or the abstract in terms of the concrete, and may therefore be more extended. Analogy also appears to be related to the figure of *exemplum*, i.e., citing an example or using an illustrative story or fable to make a point, however, is far less common in this text.

Facility with analogy was considered to be a hallmark of erudition and good writing style for all Buddhist authors in Tibet. Longchenpa uses analogy very self-consciously, and places particular value on its skilful and appropriate deployment in many of his works. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* itself includes several discussions of the proper use and understanding of analogy and its significance in religious (particularly Great Perfection) discourse. In fact, the title, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality,* itself is an analogy Longchenpa employs in the concluding chapter in which he compares the text with its structure to the treasure house of a monarch, replete with immeasurable wealth.

We will examine below one of the most prevalent analogies used in all Great Perfection literature, that of the *khyung*. The most prevalent analogy used in Great Perfection Mind Series

literature is probably that of space (*nam mkha'*). Reality itself (*chos nyid*) is analogized to space because they are both un-produced. In an early discussion of the the way in which the four "commitments" (*dam tshig bzhi*) of absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and unity are sub-divided by way of the four semantic categories (*don gyi bye brag bzhi*) of indicting, arresting, confining, and convicting, Lonchenpa explains how all the meanings can be delineated through the use of the analogy off space:

> In brief, vision reveals the key point of the inner structure (phug thag) in which all phenomena—i.e., presences that are interpreted as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—are nothing other than presencing as the playfulness, the dynamism, and the ornamentation of the self-emergent primordial gnosis.[52] [All phenomena] are confined within their natural resting place of self-emergent primordial gnosis by the simplicity of unrestricted wisdom energy. [All phenomena] are bound within the conduct of naked natural dissipation of whatever presences by way of their spontaneous presence within self-emergent primordial gnosis. All phenomena are convicted as the fruit within the scope of solitary spontaneity since are nothing other than self-emergent primordial gnosis.· Although all these are expressed individually, their meanings are encompassed within the sphere of self-emergent primordial gnosis. This very point can be delineated in terms of analogy (*dpe*), significance (*don*), and indication (*rtags*).[54]

These three, namely analogy (*dpe*), significance (*don*), and indication (*rtags*) refer to a standard tantric hermeneutical strategy. "In dependence on the analogy, you recognize the significance. In dependence on the indication/sign, faith arises" (*dpe la brten nas, don ngo shes/ rtags la brten nas, yid ches 'gyur*). Longchenpa goes on to clarify what he means with a quotation from *The All-Creating King Tantra:*

> If you wish for a definite realization of the meaning [of all phenomena being
> encompassed by primordial gnosis],
> Think of space as an analogy.
> The significance of the analogy is that reality is unproduced,
> And the indication is that your mind itself is ceaseless.
> The reality that is like space is

> Symbolically evoked by the analogy of the space.[55]

The analogy is "reality is like space." The significance of the analogy is "like space, reality is unproduced," beyond the workings of causality. The indication or sign that this is the case is the unceasing nature of mind. Elsewhere Longchenpa elaborates on this analogy in slightly different terms:

> Through not realizing the enlightening mind of the sky-like awareness, saṃsāra is created, and it appears as the environment together with the beings therein; through realizing it, nirvāṇa is created, and it appears as the spiritual gestalts and primordial wisdom. Although awareness has created everything, no one at all has created awareness—it has abided spontaneously from the very beginning. An analogy for this is the sky; the significance is awareness; the sign is the unimpeded manifestation [of everything] from within the enlightening mind. You should try to understand by means of these three.[56]

Here Longchenpa uses the analogy of space to illustrate awareness, i.e., the cognitive aspect of reality, rather than reality itself. As fond of analogy and metaphor as Longchenpa is, he warns against too liberal an application of analogies, which might lead one to draw erroneous conclusions:

> Just as a garuḍa first takes off from the top of a rock, if you were to think that when you progress to higher [vehicles] through depending on lower [vehicles], and that later, just like soaring in the sky, that it is appropriate to operate without exerting yourself in any stressful activities, you would be sadly mistaken. Although a person may operate on the level of cyclic existence through training his or her faculties, in this context you should apply the analogy to the time when the garuḍa soars in the sky, but should not apply analogies of every garuḍa situation. [145] An analogy illustrates only a portion and besides that is not fit to illustrate everything; if it were fit to do so, then since it would be the actual meaning, it would not be an analogy![57]

The evocation of the *khyung* bird to illustrate or represent the Great Perfection view or its practitioners closely resembles the rhetorical device of personification as well. Personification

metaphorically represents an animal or inanimate object as having human attributes–attributes of form, character, feelings, behavior, and so on. Ideas and abstractions can also be personified.

Other important analogies utilized in *Treasury of Abiding Reality* include the analogy of clouds vanishing into the sky to illustrate the way all phenomena finally revert and dissolve into the range of awareness (*rig pa'i ngang*), the analogy of the sun in the sky dispelling dark clouds to illustrate awareness dawning with reality's expanse and automatically clearing away the "clouds" of ethical norms of "good" and "evil", along with the notions of cause and effect upon which they are based. Similarly, the analogy of a sprout being produced by a seed is explicitly mentioned as being unsuitable to illustrate the un-produced nature of reality, and is likened to distorted perceptions experienced under the influence of a fever:

> All hallucinations (*'khrul snang*) that may appear to one who has been seized by a high fever do not exist in fact. Similarly, the example of phenomena that are produced and cease is not to be adopted with regard to [the teaching on] non-production. Therefore, you should understand that the analogy of a sprout being produced from a seed is not to be adopted with regard to the sky, and likewise the erroneous analogy of cause and effect is not to be taken up with respect to the actual essence of the mind-as-such.[58]

Reality as perceived by a person who has not understood the Great Perfection perspective is analogized to the hallucinations of one gripped by delirium—such visions, however vivid they may be, do not actually exist. Believing in things as they appear to "normal" people is just like taking the phantasms of delirium as if they were real. Thus, it would be a mistake to apply the seemingly rational analogies of a sprout and seed to phenomena that are unproduced to prove that they are produced, and thus subject to the laws of cause and effect.

Another interesting example is analogizing a person engaged in the (purportedly unsurpassed) tantric meditation practices such as visualization and dissolution to a child building sand castles. Commenting on his own verses, Longchenpa states:

> Children build and destroy sand castles (*bye ma'i khang bu*) on their playground, and in a similar way, [in meditation] one generates [visualizations], and having done so, one gradually absorbs (*bsdu ba*) them into emptiness and so forth. These are practiced on the conventional level, but represent a belief (*'dzin pa*) in

> something that is ultimately absent. Hence, all things that involve the three doors' striving and accomplishment are like that. The yogic adept binds all [notions of] virtue and vice and cause and effect into the great condition devoid of activities, passed beyond movement (*g.yo*) and striving.[59]

The discussion of meditation and sādhana practice at first seems incongruous in the context of this presentation. However it follows in the sense that the mental construction and absorbtion of visualizations of elaborate palaces and so forth, is the ultimate sand castle building and destroying. Furthermore, the very next line describes what a yogin should do in the meditative context.

ANTITHESIS

Antithesis establishes a clear, contrasting relationship between two ideas by joining them together or juxtaposing them, often in parallel structure. This is a very common figure throughout *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* (and indeed, throughout Great Perfection literature), as may have already been evident in some of the examples used above to illustrate different rhetorical principles. Most frequently these appear in the form of two-word paired opposites such as "cause-effect" (*rgyu 'bras*) or "good-evil" (*bzang ngan*), and nearly always pertain to some discussion or analysis of ethical norms and conduct. Also, whereas *antithesis* is sometimes defined as "repetition by negation" (e.g., "A man should be mourned at his birth, not his death"), in this context it is used to convey the shortcomings of viewing things in terms of polar oppositions.[60] Hence, each of all of these two-word terms are followed by some word to express negation or transcendence, such as "*passed beyond* cause and effect" (*rgyu 'bras las 'das pa*), and so forth, which relates to the discussion of apophatic rhetoric immediately below. The chief use of *antithesis* here is to serve as a means to express a sense of completeness of any given topic with only two terms. Among the more significant examples of these paired oppositions are saṃsāra and nirvāṇa (*'khor 'das*), virtue and vice (*dge sdig*), presence and absence (*yod med*) (sometimes better translated existence and non-existence), buddha and sentient beings (*snags rgyas sems can*), to name a few. The following passage from the root verses is a good example of the way in which Longchenpa uses these antitheses as a means to illustrate the inadequacy of normal conceptions based on polarized categories to attain a realization of the Great Perfection's view:

In this way, you resolve that phenomena of appearances interpreted
in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa
Are devoid of distortion and non-distortion, and hence
You will never attain nirvāṇa through forsaking saṃsāra.
By resolving that [such phenomena] are devoid of both production
and non-production,
You transcend domains (yul) of grasping at production and cessation,
presence and absence.
By deciding that are being devoid of purity and non-purity,
Being without good and bad and the attendant attitudes of acceptance
and rejection, you become balanced (phyam) whereupon
You convict all phenomena into the totally positive openness.[61]

Here we find a series of antitheses (and their negations) designed to undermine one's normal way of thinking about causation, ethics, and so forth. Thus, appearances normally interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are determined to be without distortion or non-distortion (another pair of opposites usually deemed to be the cause of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, respectively). Since these categories are invalid, notions of abandoning one and taking up another (*spang len*) are also called into question. Phenomena are neither produced nor decay, and realizing this one transcends grasping at notions of existence and non-existence. When one understands that phenomena are neither pure nor impure, notions of good and evil with their concomitants acceptance and rejection naturally fall away and one achieves a balanced state in which all things are seen in an open positive way.

APOPHASIS

Apophasis asserts or emphasizes something by pointedly seeming to pass over, ignore, or deny it. Literally, the term means "speaking away," and this has become the basis for an entire theological methodology sometimes called the *via negativa*, i.e., which seeks to get at the divine through negation, allowing that no words will adequately describe it. Micahel Sells argues that *apophasis* is not a direct negation of a prior affirmative statement, but a way of "unsaying" it. He states, "Apophasis is a discourse in which any single proposition is acknowledged as falsifying, as reifying. It is a discourse of double propositions, in which meaning is generated through the

tension between the saying and the unsaying."[62] Any form of apophatic theology must always be understood in relation to, or in the context of, a kataphatic (from the Greek, *cataphasis*) discourse or a way of affirmation. Kataphatic theology is an approach to the divine that emphasizes or asserts its positive qualities. Apophatic discourse is thus a response to a problem: If I posit the existence of an unlimited, ultimate principle, then how can I refer to it? Names by their very nature delimit. To name something I create a boundary between it and what it is not. Professor Sells suggests that the way to free oneself from this reifying tendency in language is to use langauge against itself.

Another possible way of understanding the apopahtic language in texts such as *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is to view it as *performative*, that is, they are designed to trigger in the reader or audience a comprehension of the way of being that the text itself mirrors in its performance. Comprehension is participation in the truth the text represents through "bewildering" the mind into a realization of the truth. Sells states,

> On the literary level, unsaying demands a full utilization of the literary, theological, and philosophical resources of the tradition. Its achievement is unstable and fleeting. It demands a rigorous and sustained effort both to use and free oneself from normal habits of thought and expression. It demands a willingness to let go, at a particular moment, of the grasping for guarantees and for knowledge as possession. It demands a moment of vulnerability.[63]

Thus the semantic event in which a proposition is constantly turned back against its referential limitations results in a momentary liberation from those limitations in a way that re-creates or at least imitates the experience to which it "refers."

The history of the relationship between apophatic and kataphatic discourses in Buddhism is a long one, and in many ways Longchenpa's texts merely represent a continuation of this longstanding tension within the Buddhist literary and philosophical traditions. In their most general and least technically theological senses the terms apophasis and kataphasis mean, respectively, discourse which proceeds by negations and discourse which proceeds by affirmations. The Madhyamika School, in particular, prefigured in the early Perfection of Wisdom (skt. *prajñāparamitā*, tib. *pha rol tu phyin pa*) literature, takes the apophatic view of language that only negative locutions can be of definitive meaning (*nges don*) and ultimate

truth (*don dam bden pa*). Any attempt to positively characterize reality is bound to fail or, worse still, may generate new errors. All positive locutions are, if not false, merely of conventional truth (*kun rdzob bden pa*).[64] However, it was never the case that these apophatic trends existed in a vacuum, and there were always discourses that employed positive dictions competing with proponents of the Madhyamika view such as the Buddha Nature (*de bzhin snying po*) and Mind Only (*sems tsam*) traditions.

In many ways, Longchenpa was heir to both these broad trends in Buddhist discourse. On the one hand, Great Perfection discourse is filled with dictions referring to the positive attributes of the absolute. For instance, it is often said that the "universal ground" (*kun gzhi*) is the primordial source of all phenomena, or that all appearances are the "display, dynamism, and ornament" (*rol pa, rtsal, rgyan*) of awareness. On the other hand, as we have seen, the Great Perfection also abounds with locutions of the negative variety that stubbornly resist attempts to fix on provisional formulations and propossitions. Although both of these currents are strongly evident in the text of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, it is the apophatic language that predominates.

The strategies for negation tend to repeat themselves throughout the text and can really be distilled down to no more than a few devices. Usually in reference to awareness (*rig pa*), primordial wisdom (*ye shes*), or the enlightening mind (*byang chub sems*), we find a series of negative statements regarding their qualities or properties. For instance, when the term *med pa* ("absence") is employed, particular qualities are said to be "absent," "lacking," "devoid," or "non-existent." When the term *bral ba* ("separation") is used, reality is said to be "free from," "separate from," "isolated from," "divorced from" those qualities. On other occasions when the term *'das pa* ("transcendence") is used, the system's terms for the absolute are said to be "beyond" or to "transcend" those qualities.

ABSENCE (MED PA)

The word *med pa* is by far the most common negation in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. It is used to "unsay" (in Sells' phrase) a variety common Buddhist terms and concepts, as well as other more generic ideas. It is important to recall, too, that *med pa* is one of the four Great Perfection "disciplineless disciplines" around which *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is organized, and thus the entire text is, in a sense, an act of "unsaying." Among the sacrosanct Buddhist

notions that are called into question primarily through the use of the term *med pa* are causality (*rgyu 'bras*), karma and its effects (*las 'bras*), subject and object (*gzung 'dzin*), virtue and vice (*dge sdig*), production and cessation (*skye 'gag*), and so forth. Most of these expressions are associated in one way or another with either normative Buddhist presentations of ethics, or in some cases relate to specific philosophical systems (*grub mtha'*). In any event, these terms are primarily associated with non-tantric forms of Buddhism, implicitly (explicitly?) demonstrating the superiority of the Great Perfection approach to the "lower" schools of Buddhist thought. The following root verse gives an idea of how these ritualized denials are treated in the text:

> **Within the limpid and consummate mind-as-such devoid of eternalism or nihilism**
> **The primordial wisdom devoid of subject-object structuration naturally abides.**
> **Within the naked awareness devoid of causal networks**
> **The singular seminal nucleus devoid of [the ethical norms of] virtue and vice abides.**
> **Within the unimpeded awareness devoid of center or margins**
> **The underlying intentionality of the totally positive Reality Gestalt naturally abides.**
> **Within the cleansing and perfecting inherent intelligence—the enlightened nucleus of absence**
> **The pure non-objectifying underlying intentionality of the Conqueror radiates.**[66]

Each line qualifies or juxtaposes a positive Great Perfection idea ("mind-as-such," "primordial wisdom," "seminal nucleus," and so forth) with a statement of absence or lack (*med pa*): primordial wisdom lacks the duality of subject and object; awareness lacks causality; the seminal nucleus lacks virtue and vice.

Longchenpa uses the term *med pa* extensively as a means to question normative Buddhist tantric practices as well. The best example of this is his borrowing from the *All-Creating King Tantra* the critique of normative tantric meditation practices and techniques usually associated with tantras of the Mahāyoga class. In tantras such as the *Secret Essence Tantra* (*rgyud gsang ba'i*

snying po), for instance, we find a group of ten standard tantric practices known as the "ten categories" (*dngos po bcu*). These are: (1) the view or perspective of the real (*de kho na nyid lta ba*), (2) conduct (*spyod pa*), (3) maṇḍala (*dkyil 'khor*), (4) empowerment or initiation (*dbang*), (5) commitments (*dam tshig*), (6) enlightened activity (*phrin las*), (7) accomplishment (*sgrub pa*), (8) offerings (*mchod pa*), (9) mantra recitation (*sngags*), and (10) depth contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin*).[67] Dodrup Jikmay Tenpay Nyima (*rdo grub 'jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma*, 1865-1926) elaborates on this topic:

> The great translator Rongzom (*rong zom chos kyi bzang po*, ca. 11th century) states that the five bases (*gzhi*) consisting of maṇḍala, accomplishment, empowerment, commitments, and enlightened activities, and the four branches consisting of mantra, mudra, depth contemplation, and offering together comprise the nine categories of the subject matter of tantra in which one should become skilled. In [Lalitavajra's] *Blazing Needle*, seven categories are explained through adding the view (*lta ba*) and conduct (*spyod pa*) on top of the five bases above. Here, however, the categories are explained as being tenfold, consisting of (1) a view of suchness (*de kho na nyid lta ba*), (2) determinate conduct (*la dor ba spyod pa*), (3) maṇḍala array (*bkod pa dkyil 'khor*), (4) successive empowerment (*rim par bgrod pa dbang*), (5) commitments that are not to be transgressed (*mi 'da' ba dam tshig*), (6) display of enlightened activity (*rol pa phrin las*), (7) accomplishment of aspirations (*don du gnyer ba sgrub pa*), (8) unwavering contemplation (*mi g.yo ba ting nge 'dzin*), (9) offerings that bring the goal to fuition (gnas su stobs pa mchod pa), and (10) mantra recitation and mudra that bind (*'ching zlos sngags dang phyag rgya*).[68]

The All-Creating King treats a very similar group of ten known as the "ten natures" (*rang bzhin bcu*) at length. The ten natures are as follows: (1) the view (*lta ba*), (2) commitments (*dam tshig*), (3) empowerment (*dbang*), (4) maṇḍala (*dkyil 'khor*), (5) spiritual level (*sa*), (6) spiritual path (*lam*), (7) enlightened activities (*phrin las*), (8) primordial wisdom (*ye shes*), (9) the fruit (*'bras bu*), and (10) reality (*chos nyid*).[69] Although these lists are not identical, they share five components, and seem to be addressing similar issues and concerns. At any rate, given each list's inclusion of items such as commitments, empowerment, and maṇḍalas, it is not difficult to understand how both lists pertain specifically to tantric practice.

The important difference between these two presentations, however, is that, unlike *The Secret Essence Tantra* in which these practices are to be adopted, in *The All-Creating King* (and hence in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*), this group of ten is deprecated, denied, negated. Longchenpa summarizes:

> The Ten Natures are the view, commitments, empowerment, maṇḍala, spiritual levels, spiritual paths, enlightened activities, primordial wisdom, fruition, and reality—realizing that these are the ten *absences (med pa)* is the Great Perfection view.[70]

Hence, whereas in the general tantric tradition one is to attend to the details of ritual, initiation, keeping of vows, and so forth, in the Great Perfection one is to observe the *absence* of these. Longchenpa continues with a citation from *The All-Creating King* that brings this paradox into sharper focus:

> The enlightening mind is like the sky.
> Within the reality which is the space-like mind-as-such,
> There is no cultivating the view, and pledges do not need to be observed,
> There is no exertion in spiritual activities, and primordial wisdom lacks any obstructions,
> There is no training in the spiritual levels, and likewise there is no path on which to progress,
> There are no subtle doctrines/phenomena, no duality, and no dependent relationships,
> There is no delineation of definitive scriptures pertaining to mind [itself], and
> Since [mind-as-such] transcends exaggeration and deprecation, there is no 'conviction' (*la bzlar*) or esoteric instructions (*man ngag*).
> This is the Great Perfection view of the enlightening mind.[71]

In the wrong context (or right one, depending on one's point of view), statements such as these could almost be construed as heretical. To suggest that one doesn't need to cultivate or meditate (*bsgom pa*) upon the view, or to observe one's (tantric) pledges, or train in the levels, or progress on the path are shocking assertions in most Buddhist circles, particularly those that explicitly

value stages of practice and the structure of causality such stages presuppose. This radical questioning and undermining of terms and doctrines highly valued by the normative tradition is all achieved through the deceptively simple term *med pa*.

SEPARATION (BRAL BA)

The term *bral ba* ("detachment," "separation") is virtually synonymous with *med pa*, and achieves a similar effect in terms of its power of rhetorical negation. It is used liberally throughout Great Perfection literature in general, and in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in particular. As with the term *med pa*, *bral ba* is used to express the pristine nature of awareness and reality. Hence, for example, the text describes reality as being "free from acceptance and rejection, complication and simplification" (*btang bzhag spro bsdu dang bral ba*). Among the most common figures used in the text employing this term are "free from discursive elaboration" (spros bral), "free from activity" (*bya bral*) in the sense of nothing needing to be done, "free from extremes" (*mtha' bral*) in the sense of not being affected by extreme philosophical positions or "freedom from limitations" (*mtha' bral*) in the sense of being boundless,[72] "free from characterization" (*mtshon bral*) in the sense of defying description, and "free from linguistic and conceptual expression" (*bsam brjod dang bral ba*). Although *bral ba* clearly conveys the sense of one thing being set apart, detached, divorced, or separated from another, like *med pa*, when affixed to a verb or noun it can often best be understood as simply functioning as a negation. Thus the terms *rtog med* (literally, "conception-absence") and *rtog bral* (literally, "conception-separation") are virtually synonymous, and are both best translated as simply "non-conceptual." The following example from the root verses provides a good example of how this figure is employed by Longchenpa to achieve these rhetorical effects:

> **Within ultimate awareness, the nucleus of enligtenment,**
> **No spatial or conceptual positions are visible and it is free from**
> **partiality [arising from grasping] characteristics;**
> **It cannot be delineated by way of terms or valid cognition;**
> **It defies description, and in it permanence and annihilation, increase**
> **and decrease, and coming and going are absent.**
> **Being an intensely vast and spontaneous state of balance (*mnyam*), it**
> **is completely pure, and hence,**

It is continuous simplicity, free from all polarizations and fragmentation.[73]

Ultimate awareness, in general a positive phenomenon, is nevertheless completely divorced from partiality, prejudice, or bias arising from concrete characteristics since it has no such characteristics. It cannot adequately be described using the terminology of the Buddhist logico-epistemological tradition—indeed, it cannot be described at all.

TRANSCENDENCE ('DAS PA)

The term *'das pa* is similar to the previous to the previous two in the sense that it calls the terms onto which it is affixed into doubt, but it achieves this effect through a slightly different means. Whereas on the literal level *med pa* simply indicates the absence or non-existence of a particular quality or characteristic and *bral ba* indicates a state of isolation from those qualities, *'das pa* suggests that these qualities are transcended, gone beyond, left behind. In certain circumstances it can convey the sense of "transgression" as well. Hence it is a nuanced term conveying subtle variations from the earlier figures of negation.

Despite the fact that this term has shades and nuance not found in other terms, on a practical level it still addresses many of the same concerns and serves many of the same functions. For instance, just as in the previous discussions, the term *'das pa* is used to describe how awareness, the enlightening mind, or primordial wisdom are beyond ordinary reasoning and language, or conversely, that conceptual or linguistic delineations are entirely absent in these. Specific common examples include statements that awareness is beyond causality (*rgyu 'bras las 'das pa*) and variations thereon, that it is beyond all forms of mental or verbal expression (*smra bsam brjod las 'das pa*), that it transcends activities of striving or exertion (*bya rtsol 'das pa*), or that it is beyond analysis or investigation (*rtog dpyod 'das*). Although these statements are most commonly made in reference to reality or awareness, ordinary phenomena can be described similarly using the term *'das pa*, as in Longchenpa's brief comment that, "all phenomena never pass beyond (*'das pa*) either awareness or the dynamism of awareness."[74] The following root verse contains several instances of this figure as it is used to show how phenomena and the enlightened nucleus are beyond the four "extreme" philosophical positions:

Convicting [all phenomena] into absence is the acutal essence.

> **Since all phenomena—appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—**
> **Are absent in their nature, they transcend doctrines of 'presence';**
> **Since the way in which things appear is unobstructed, they transcend doctrines of 'absence';**
> **Since both presence and absence are absent, they transcend doctrines that try to encompass both;**
> **Since "the two" are absent, it transecends doctrines that are neither;**
> **Since they neither are or not, the actual enlightened nucleus**
> **Cannot be decribed by calling it "this," since it transcends all thought and expression.[75]**

All phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa lack inherent existence, and thus they cannot be characterized in terms of presence, but their mode of appearance is unceasing so they cannot be characterized in terms of absence either. Without either presence or absence, one cannot characterize phenomena as being both, and since not being both is likewise absent, they are beyond the conventional language. Longchenpa takes up this theme later in the section of convicting all phenomena into spontaneity using similar devices:

> All phenomena are concentrated within awareness, and since the enlightening mind of awareness is empty of essence, it transcends the [philosophical] position of eternalism. Since the nature of the enlightening mind is luminously radiant, it transcends the extreme of nihilism. Transcending the domain of the four extremes of presence, absence, both, and neither, spontaneous presence itself is said to be "the original purity of the source, devoid of proofs, refutations, transitions and transformations."[76]

Here Longchenpa refines the discussion of the four extremes to include eternalism and nihilism, and the transcendence thereof.

APORIA

Aporia is to talk about not being able to talk about or decide something. As we have seen just above, this is so common a rhetorical strategy in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* as to be almost

routine. The three strategies of negation discussed in the foregoing presentation on *apophasis* are used more or less equally as means to "talk about" the ineffabilty of the absolute and the experience of it. For instance, the dimension of Great Perfection is said to be "devoid of words and letters" (*tshigs dang yi ge med pa*); the "space" (*klong*) that is the nature of phenomena is "inexpressible" (*brjod du med pa*), and is even beyond our imaginations (*bsam las 'das pa*); awareness "defies description" (*mtshon bral*), cannot be intellectualized (*blo bral*), and is even beyond analogy (*dper mtshon pa'i yul las kyang 'das pa*).

APPOSITIVE

Appositio refers to a noun or noun substitute placed next to (in apposition to) another noun to be described or defined by the appositive. The appositive can be placed before or after the noun. With the great number of synonyms in play in Great Perfection discourse, it is no surprise that one often encounters these expressions in close proximity. In addition to simple synonymous terms such as "awareness," "primordial wisdom," and "enlightening mind," all of which are used more or less interchangeably throughout this and other Great Perfection texts, there are numerous adjectival phrases or compounds, usually apophatic in character, that refer to something outside themselves, similar to the way the English term "redneck" refers to a person rather than a neck (i.e., a redneck is [a person with a] red neck). This is like the *bahuvrihi* compound in Sanskrit, and corresponds to the form of *metonymy* in which a speaker or author substitutes a quality of a thing for its proper name (see below).

In the present context, if we include such adjectival compounds to our list of synonyms the list becomes even more extensive. We have already seen some of the best examples of these phrases including, "[that which is] beyond affirmation or negation" (*grub bsal med pa*), "[that which is] beyond transformation or change" (*'pho 'gyur med pa*), "[that which] transcends causal networks" (*rgyu 'bras las 'das pa*), and so forth, all of which serve to describe or stand for " the expanse of reality" (*chos dbyings*). One of the clearest examples of this practice of stringing together more or less synonymous terms is found on the very first page of the commentary:

> When the glorious All Good, having enlightened all phenomena into the primordial ground, dwells in the indestructible expanse in the manner of great equality, he turns the unsurpassed Dharma-wheel of definitive meaning. The supreme fruit of these turnings of the wheel is the great secret in which awareness,

> the enlightening mind, the Reality-gestalt, the suchness beyond affirmation and negation, transformation or change, is taught in direct immediacy as transcending causal networks driven by striving and accomplishment.[77]

The most evident use of apposition in this passage is the enumeration of synonyms and compounds, "...awareness, the enlightening mind, the Reality Gestalt, the suchness beyond affirmation and negation, transformation or change...". However, even the first part of the passage plays with the use of synonyms in close proximity when it states that the [buddha] glorious All Good enlightens all phenomena into the primordial ground and dwells in the indestructible expanse, since "All Good" (*kun tu bzang po*), the "primordial ground" (*thog ma'i gzhi*), and "indestructible expanse" (*rdo rje'i dbyings*) are synonymous. Thus, even if the terms are not stacked up right next to each other, Longchenpa achieves a similar effect by placing them in such close proximity.

BENEDICTIO

Benedictio, as the name suggests, is a blessing, or the act of blessing. Almost all Tibetan religious texts end with some form of benediction or another. In many cases, it is an abbreviated evocation of virtue or benevolence, and in other cases it is a highly elaborate prayer for the flourishing of the teachings contained in the particular text, with aspirations that they may benefit others. Such elaborate endings are often termed "dedications" (*bsngo ba*), in which the merits from writing or teaching or explaining the content of the text is then "dedicated" to the eventual liberation of sentient beings, or other worthy enterprises.

In the case of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, as one might expect, Longchenpa errs on the side of greater elaboration, including an entire closing section devoted to such a dedication. This section is divided into individual components: (1) the dedication for the complete liberation of the three realms, (2) dedication for the spread and increase of the teachings, (3) a description of the author and how he composed the text, and (4) a section to arouse joy in the teachings for people of future generations. He follows this with concluding verses of auspiciousness.

The prayer of dedication for the liberation of beings maintains the Great Perfection language's characteristic flavor:

> **I have taught in such a way through disclosing**

The meaningful dimension of the supremely esoteric Great Perfection,
holding nothing back.
May all transmigrating beings without exception become naturally
free
Without any effort within the expanse of the primal sky![78]

Here again, the prayer is not for beings to proceed through a series of graduated spiritual disciplines in order to achieve ever-increasing levels of purity and realization. Rather it is a prayer that through the profundity of the Great Perfection teachings being will simply recognize their own primordial identity and become naturally free immediately and without effort or anxiety. Longchenpa adds in his commentary, "May they become the venerable holy one who resides within oneself—the great All Good Samantabhadra!"

The dedication prayers for the spread of the teachings utilizes the familiar metaphor of the *khyung*, as well as the image of the victory-banner that when held aloft is visible from great distances and all directions:

The doctrine that eliminates things external to the view with a vast
surge
Is the pinnacle of the vehicles, the expanse of the Garuḍa, king of the
birds.
May the transmission of the Ati-Yoga that surpasses all others,
The unsinkable victory banner, proliferate throughout the ten
directions!

The *khyung* surveys the entire earth while soaring in space, and similarly the Great Perfection is said to shatter the superficial layers of all philosophical perspectives. The transmissions of the tradition are likened to the ornament at the crest of an unsinkable victory banner, visible in all the ten directions.

Longchenpa recapitulates the structure and content of the material in the next section concerning the identity of the author and the manner in which the text was composed. He briefly reminds his audience of the main themes of Great Perfection in general, the Mind, Space, and Esoteric Precept Series or the "nine spaces." In particular, Longchenpa reiterates the four main themes of the text, absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and unity, and the further

fourfold division of indictment, arrest, incarceration, and conviction. Finally, Longchenpa engages in some creative etymology on his own name, suggesting some identity between the author (i.e., himself) and the meaning of the words *klong chen rabs 'byams* (literally, "infinite great space"), suggesting that these words accurately describe the nature and quality of his realization. He states the fact that the teaching was "well set forth" (*leg par bkod pa*) shows it will benefit others in the future.

In the section concerned with engendering joy in the fortunate future generations of practitioners, Longchenpa plays on the analogy inherent in the title of the text, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, showing that, just as a treasure house is adorned with wealth and jewels, so too is the "treasure house of abiding reality" (the text) is adorned with splendid arrays of words and meanings. The root verse states:

The definitive meaning, the five topics of the "treasure house of abiding reality,"
Is well adorned with vast and profound wealth.
May this [treatise], beautified with a variegated array of words and meanings,
Delight assemblies of fortunate beings.[79]

Here the image is more a metaphor (i.e., the text *is* a treasure house adorned with wealth rather than being compared to one) than an analogy. Longchenpa's commentary to this verse develops this more fully:

> The treasure house of the Wheel Turning King who has completely conquered the four directions is adorned with the immeasurable wealth and is completely decked out in dazzling arrays. Likewise, the treasure house of the spontaneously present Vajra-Tip shines forth in the individual "stories" (rim khang) of the five definitive topics. These are adorned with the miraculously profound and vast meaning and superbly beautified by the excellent presentation of an array of words and meanings. I advise the assemblies of future fortunate beings that just this [treatise], set forth as an inexhaustable and precious treasure, serves as the basis for thoroughgoing conduct. Therefore, it is said, "May this bring about true joy!" This ties up the loose ends [of the text] by adorning it with expressions of auspiciousness

> as a good omen that those who have engaged in the meaningful dimension of the king of vehicles will have the miraculous pledges and that the teaching will abide for a long time. With that in mind, this ornament of benediction is meant to activate auspiciousness and virtue everywhere and at all times.[80]

In the verse, the (text) *Treasury of Abiding Reality* is a treasure house, and in the commentary, it is **like** a treasure house filled with wealth, jewels, and so forth, all stunningly arrayed, which are analogous to the sublime subject matter of the text.

The concluding section is then a series of "verses of auspiciousness" that express in a free and poetic way the splendor and majesty of the Great Perfection. The commentary itself constantly draws on poetic material, both original and from scriptural sources, but it is arranged in a way to make its points in a very orderly, structured way. Here, Longchenpa the poet's only goal is to wax rhapsodic on the topic of Great Perfection in a mode of aspiration, thanksgiving, and benediction. The early verses are characteristic:

> May the empty light of the benevolent sun of auspiciousness
> Bring good fortune throughout all the directions and eliminate the darkness of the four continents!
>
> May the amazing incredible and profound dimension of auspiciousness
> Reveal the appearance of the excellent doctrine of auspiciousness to all beings!
>
> May a mass of nectar-clouds in the expanse of the auspicious sky
> Cause a constant rain of everything auspicious that one wishes to fall!
>
> May the cruising of the auspicious and highest of vehicles
> Cause a great rain of auspicious and manifest enlightenment to fall!

In addition to the aspirational character of these verses, Longchenpa also uses them as an opportunity to express material that is usually included in textual colophons such as the place and circumstances of composition.

DIALOGISMUS

Dialogismus is the practice of speaking as someone else, either to bring in others' points of view into one's own speech, or to conduct a pseudo-dialog through taking up an opposing position

with oneself. This practice is a common device in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophical treatises, whereby one rhetorically represents an opposing philosophical view in what is called in Sanskrit *puurva-paksha*. The literal meaning of this term is the fore part or side, but as a literary term it refers to the first objection to any assertion, or the prima facie view or argument in any question. This hypothetical objection would then be followed with the author's rejoinder, termed an *uttara-paksha* or reply or refutation, i.e., the correct answer to the former objection.[81] Thus, authors of such philosophical treatises would often seek to disarm counter-arguments in the body of their texts, thereby effectively addressing obvious qualms and remonstrations, or simply to differentiate their own views from other somewhat similar competing views.

In Tibetan literature, this representation of an opponent's view was usually achieved through the use of the simple expression *kha cig*—"some people" or "certain people." The identity of the hypothetical interlocutor was seldom made explicit, the fame of his or her (erroneous) views being enough to identify him or him in the minds of one's audience, although there are certain instances where the identity is specified. In *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* Longchenpa uses this device several times, although it tends to feel a bit out of synch with the bulk of the language in the text. For instance, as described elsewhere in this section, Longchenpa devotes significant energy to refuting the assertion that "mind" and "enlightening mind" (*byang chub kyi sems*) or "mind-as-such" (*sems nyid*) are identical.

> *Question*: Aren't you explaining that everything is mind?
>
> *Answer*: In this context, I teach a series of clear distinctions between [the Mind-Only and the Great Perfection views on this issue]. In general, appearances that are interpreted as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are explained as being the enlightening mind. Those appearances are concordant in the sense that they have never wavered from the range of unitary awareness, and they naturally manifest as the playfulness, dynamism, and ornamentation of awareness. Thinking of that, we call [phenomenal appearances] "mind." It is like having named the light rays of the sun the sun, and thus we say, "go sit in the sun-room."[82]

Although much of Great Perfection discourse looks extremely similar to the rhetoric of the Mind Only school of Buddhist philosophy, and in fact may be deeply indebted to it for both its language and content, Longchenpa is keen to differentiate their respective positions.[83] Here the

key distinction is that while it may be accurate to assert that the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arise through the playfulness, dynamism, and ornamentation of the enlightening mind, it cannot be said that they are mind itself. Shortly after this, Longchenpa takes up the issue once more:

> These days there are certain people (*kha cig*) who are arrogant in their knowledge of the Great Perfection and [followers of] ordinary vehicles who assert appearances to be their own minds. They speak without differentiating the positions [of the various schools], and thus propound a very grave mistake. Hence, mind and enlightening mind are not the same at all. Ordinary mind is the adventitious impurity of the three realms of cyclic existence involving the eight modalities of perceptual consciousness along with their associated mental factors. Enlightening mind is awareness, self-emergent primordial gnosis, devoid of substantiality and concrete characteristics, and it is the expanse of everything in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.[84]

Here, without explicitly identifying his adversaries, Longchenpa still adopts a polemical tone in his remarks. He differentiates these two key concepts, and reiterates that one can say appearances are "mind" only in a loose way in the sense that the enlightening mind is the ground or cause for such appearances and this would be a case of referring to the effect as its cause.

This strategy also closely resembles that of *procatalepsis*, which, by anticipating an objection and answering it, permits an argument to continue moving forward while taking into account points or reasons opposing either the train of thought or its final conclusions. Sometimes the writer will invent probable or possible difficulties in order to strengthen his position by showing how they could be handled if they should arise, as well as to present an answer in case the reader or someone else might raise them in the course of subsequent consideration.

ECPHONESIS

Ecphonesis is an emotional exclamation. Such exclamations are quite common in Great Perfection canonical literature, but Longchenpa's use of them in his own text is more sparing. Among the most frequent of these figures employed in Great Perfection literature, and within quotations used in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, are the expressions *e ma ho* ("Amazing!"), *kye ma* ("Alas!"), and *kye* ("Hey!"). The first is described as an expression of wonderment, the second as

an exclamation of despair or sadness, and the last as an exclamation of calling or a sign of the vocative case.

Longchenpa's own most sustained deployment of the first figure, *e ma ho*, comes in his concluding verses of auspiciousness discussed above, in which he uses the expression as a type of *epistrophe* (see above) at the end of a series of quatrains:

> Within the primordially empty expanse is the wide-open and empty intellect.
> Based on the comfort and ease of the Ground, the mind's comfort and ease is unceasing.
> Within the expanse in which all phenomena are consumed, the exhaustion of the intellect is a pleasant experience.
> This is the yoga infinite like the sky—E MA HO!
>
> One's own bed, the non-conceptual Reality-Gestalt, is vast like the sky.
> The natural contemplation is the unbroken flow of a river.
> The entire traditional 'ground-path' structure is traversed through this single realization.
> This is the real wisdom energy of the All Good—E MA HO!
>
> Within the pure sky of the self-emergent primordial awareness,
> Soars the Great Garuḍa of realization, of the Yoga free from purposive action.
> Absence, Simplicity, Spontaneity, and Unity themselves
> Are the enlightened nucleus of the uncontrived dimension—E MA HO!
>
> In this great openness of awareness, naturally luminous and spontaneously present,
> Whatever appears is the unimpeded dynamism of awareness.
> Vividly appearing yet absent, it is mere illusory play.
> This is the Great Empty endowed with all forms of expression—E MA HO!
>
> Here in this royal depth intentionality, unwavering, just as it is,
> Is the sphere of equality, naturally manifesting, naturally abiding, and naturally dissolving.
> It is pleasant, radiant, and non-conceptual—a sky free from center and periphery.

This is the wisdom depth intention that transcends notions of intervals between meditation sessions (*thun mtshams*)—E MA HO!

The Reality-Gestalt, the immutable awareness of radiant emptiness
Is the pure and complete openness of intrinsic awareness of the primordially pure saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
Subjectivity and objectivity are the dynamism of the Reality-Gestalt, self-appearing and groundless—
This is the realization that transcends any symbolic expression—E MA HO![85]

The repeated use of this exclamation of awe or wonderment as an *epistrophe* at the end of a succession of parallel rhythmic verses creates energy and momentum, driving home the sheer appreciation of Great Perfection's marvelous qualities.

In Buddhist literature the term *kye ma*, a cry of pity or compassion, is generally used as a means to express concern for the miserable condition of sentient beings. Although this figure occurs in several of Longchenpa's scriptural citations in *The Treasury of Abiding* Reality, it is used only once in his own text. The following is from his root verses:

The sun of the ultimate self-emergent awareness,
Is [equally] obscured by both the white and dark clouds of virtue and vice,
And is afflicted by the lightning of fixating on making efforts in what is to be accepted and rejected.
Due to the continuous rain of the distorted appearances of pleasure and pain falls,
The seeds of saṃsāra grow into the leaves and petals of the six types of transmigrating beings.
Alas! (*kye ma*) Take pity on the miserable six types of transmigrators![86]

This figure evokes heartfelt pangs of sympathy and concern for the wretched condition in which all beings find themselves, and is clearly the most "emotional" of the three forms of *ecphonesis* being considered here.

Finally, there is the relatively common figure *kye*, a simple vocative particle used primarily as a form of direct address and to get one's audience's attention. As with the previous two figures of speech, this term is rarely found in Longchenpa's own verses or commentary, but rather in the citations he selects. It is most frequently used in tantric dialogues in which the interlocutor (usually a bodhisattva) requests a specific teaching or instruction from the central Buddha. The Buddha in question then responds with a brief exhortation encouraging his audience to listen carefully, often beginning with the vocative particle *kye*. The following passage from *The All-Creating King Tantra* is a typical example:

> Hey Great Heroic Being! Listen up!
> [My teaching] does not accord with the Great Vehicle of cause and effect, and thus
> You should definitely understand my instruction of Universal Creativity.
> Whatever phenomena may appear and
> The reality of your own mind are identical from the very beginning, and hence
> You should not conceptualize this according to the [ordinary] system of cause and effect.
> Examining the suchness of your own mind,
> The essence of your own enlightenment will shine forth.
> Without realizing this, you label it [i.e., the Suchness of your own mind] individually,
> Designating [terms such as] "conventional appearance" and "ultimate non-appearance."
> Conventional and Ultimate are not two things, but in truth are one.
> Naming the real [in this dualistic way], even I would be deluded!
> Neurotic desire for happiness is a disease;
> You obtain happiness [only] through the absence of desire.
> Buddhahood is not achieved through accomplishing activities—
> It is spontaneously present due to effortlessly abiding in your own nature.
> [Therefore] rest without conceptualizing within your own abiding nature!![91]

This and similar uses of the term *kye* are very common in the tantras Longchenpa cites in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality.* Longchenpa does not use the figure at all in his own verses and commentary, however, possibly because this is a device reserved for buddha-voiced scripture.

ENUMERATIO

Enumeratio is a figure detailing parts, causes, effects, or consequences to make a point more forcibly. We find examples of *enumeratio* throughout *The Treasury of Abiding Reality,* and indeed, the practice is very popular throughout Buddhist literature, particularly in Abhidharma texts.

One particularly interesting example of Longchenpa's use of this device comes very near the end of his commentary, where he is making his concluding remarks. Other than announcing in the title of the commentary, *A Meaning Commentary on the Quintessence of the Three Series (sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel),* that the text is concerned with the "Three Series" (sde gsum) of Mind Series, Space Series, and Esoteric Precept Series, Longchenpa is at no particular pains to make this association explicit throughout most of the text. If one does an analysis of the textual categories from which Longchenpa draws his supporting quotations, one finds that most are either from the Mind Series or the Esoteric Precept Series. However, near the end of the text in the concluding chapter, while discussing how and by whom the text was composed, Longchenpa suddenly introduces the enumeration of "the nine open spaces" (klong dgu):

> **Having been bound with the three series, the nine open spaces and the four rubrics,**
> **The definitive meaning is extracted in terms of the sixteen doctrinal categories.**[92]

Longchenpa informs us that the meaning of the text can be understood in terms of the three series, the four rubrics, and the sixteen doctrinal categories. He also says it can be understood in terms of the nine open spaces, a classification scheme never mentioned anywhere in the text until now. What *are* the nine open spaces? Do they relate to the Space Series? Longchenpa then utilizes the strategy of enumeration in his commentary to explicate this:

> If you condense all the doctrinal categories of the natural Great Perfection, they are included within the Mind Series (*sems sde*), Space Series (*klong sde*) and the Esoteric Instruction Series (*man ngag sde*).
>
> To expand on that a little, they are included within the nine Open Spaces (*klong*) consisting of (1) The Open Space of the originally pure essence, (2) the Open Space of the spontaneously present nature, (3) the Open Space in which manifestations are not obstructed in the least, (4) the Open Space free from exertion in stressful activities based on cause and effect, (5) the Open Space in which deviations and obscurations are purified right from the start, (6) the Open Space which is primordially pure of meditation on views, (7) the Open Space of non-activity which is free from fabrication and pollution, (8) the Open Space of the continuous wisdom energy of the Buddhas, and (9) the Open Space in which all phenomena are released right in their own place.[93]

The overall langauge used to describe these nine spaces is very familiar and consonant with the rest of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Thus, although the category is not particularly familiar to readers of this particular text, Longchenpa shows how these "spaces" make sense in the present context, and he uses the strategy of *enumeratio* as a means to build and extend their acceptance in that context.

EUTREPISMUS

Eutrepismus is a figure of division which numbers and orders the parts under consideration. This is a very common literary practice in Tibetan philosophical treatises whereby the contents of the text are divided and identified to a very granular level. The Tibetan term for this practice is *sa bcad* ("earth-cutting"), conveying the sense of "to survey," "to appraise," "to assay," or "to divide." The usual pattern in such texts is to engage in such a "division" or "survey" of the contents following some prefatory material, normally including a verse of homage, and an introduction announcing the subject and purpose of the composition (*exordium*, see below). This practice could also fall under the heading of *taxis*, i.e., to divide a subject up into its various components or attributes.

In the case of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, the initial elaboration of the detailed structure of the contents of the text comes at the end of the introduction. As we saw briefly in an earlier

discussion, there fundamental fourfold structure to the text, consisting of the four themes of absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and unity. Each of these is then further divided into the four subsections of indictment, arrest, binding, and conviction. The relevant verse delineates these categories thus:

> **The final meaning of the essence of the mind, space, and esoteric**
> **precepts series resides in the four,**
> **Absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and solitariness,**
> **Each of which has four: *indictment, confinement, binding,***
> **And passing judgement.**[94]

Here, then, is the skeleton of the main sixteen topics of the text, each of the four principal themes possessing four sections. Longchenpa then expatiates on these in his commentary:

> In that way, these four are each divided into four semantic classes consisting of: (1) indicting (*gnad bkrol*) within [the courtroom of] suchness, (2) confining (*'gag bsdam*) within [the prison of] the actual self-emergent primordial wisdom, (3) binding (*chings su bcing*) within [the cell of] the unproduced which is beyond the domain of thought, and (4) convicting (*la bzla ba*) within that which transcends the causal networks of activity and striving. Hence, this presentation of the sixteen doctrinal categories is the presentation of the crucial rubrics of this treatise.[95]

Each of these sixteen has several subject-headings with specific verses, commentary, and scriptural passages to explicate them. However, unlike in more traditional philosophical treatises, these are never delineated in a form corresponding to the *sa bcad* as we have seen here.

EXORDIUM

The *exordium* is the introduction of a speech, where one announces the subject and purpose of the discourse, and where one usually employs the persuasive appeal of ethos in order to establish credibility with the audience. It is a common practice in both Indian and Tibetan Buddhist religious literature for authors, particularly of philosophical treatises (*bstan bcos*) to include in their prefatory remarks a pithy analysis of what is to come in the form of a fourfold classification (*yan lag bzhi*). This fourfold classification, literally called a "connected purpose" (*dgos

'brel), consists of the following four categories: (1) the topic or subject matter (*brjod bya*), (2) the purpose or rationale (*dgos pa*), (3) the underlying purpose (*dgos pa'i dgos pa*), sometimes known as the essential purpose (*nying dgos*), and (4) the relationship (*'brel pa*).

The subject matter is defined as being the meaning of that which is to be taught. The rationale is defined as becoming a path for understanding that subject matter and for engaging in the underlying intention of the scriptures. The underlying rationale is said to be the final manifestation of the state of omniscience. Finally, the relationship refers to the relationship between each of the previous factors such that the topic is connected with the purpose, the purpose with the further purpose, and so forth.[96] Concerning *The Treasury of Abiding* Reality, Longchenpa states:

> With this text, I will teach the commentary on the underlying intention of the Great Perfection in terms of the [standard] four branches of the text. The enlightening mind of awareness, which is beyond thought and expression, cause and effect, is the subject matter (*brjod bya*) of this treatise. The realization in that way by those of greatest [spiritual] acumen by way of the teaching of just that [subject matter] is the rationale (*dgos pa*) for the text. By taking this into one's own experience according to that realization, one arrives at that which is the ground's character; this is the underlying rationale (*dgos pa'i dgos pa*) for the text—i.e., the secondary purpose (*nying dgos*). The mutual dependence of these is the relationship (*'brel pa*).[97]

In Tibetan philosophical literature the introduction in which the subject and the purpose of the text are explicitly stated is only one component of other requisite formulae to be included within the author's introductory remarks.

IRONY

Irony is speaking in such a way as to imply the contrary of what one says, often for the purpose of derision, mockery, or jest. In the context of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, irony is almost completely absent, unlike paradox, which is found throughout the work. The relative absence of irony is somewhat surprising, given Longchenpa's tendency to state his views in very strong terms in his other works. I can only speculate on the reasons for Longchenpa's omission of this very effective rhetorical strategy. Perhaps it lacks the subtlety he favors, or perhaps it had too cynical a flavor for a Great Perfection text, which for the most part maintains a tone of relentless

positivity. Among the very few cases that might be viewed as instances of irony are the passages in which Longchenpa deprecates the spiritual acuity of "intellectuals," as in the following example:

> The very person who is cast into the cage of intellectualism with respect to what exists and does not exist is cut off from being a Yogic Adept even more than an ordinary person who does as he or she pleases. Hence, be carefree![98]

This deprecation of intellectual pursuits is made even more explicit in the passage from *The Sky Soaring Great Khyung* that Longchenpa cites immediately after this comment:

> One who is cast into the cage of intellectualism will not pass beyond the three
> realms.
> One who relaxes within an idiot's uncontrived mindset
> Does not abide within either saṃsāra or nirvāṇa.[99]

The tension here derives from the unfavorable assessment of a clever person's chances to get at the essence of the Great Perfection. A person whose frame of mind is natural (*ma bcos*), relaxed (*la lhod*), carefree (*rang dga' ba*), even idiotic (*glen pa*), stands a better chance of comprehending the Great Perfection perspective than does an intellectual or scholar.

Discerning the paradox in these passages presents no particular challenge—fools and bumpkins are more likely to become enlightened than experts—but how are they to be understood in terms of irony? I can only offer the tentative interpretation that Longchenpa writes and cites these passages with full awareness of his own undeniable identity as a premiere scholar and the almost certain intellectual background of his audience. The irony, if indeed it can be referred to as such, is that Longchenpa makes his appeal to intellectuals in intellectual terms. The implicit message, one might argue, is that the realizations supposedly reserved for persons of minimal intellectual faculties will in fact the preserve of intellectuals after all. Thus, the ostensible anti-intellectualism evinced in these passages may well be a form of intellectual elitism. The "irony" here is subtle to say the least, and is found in the fact that statements that intellectuals will not realize the meaning of Great Perfection actually mean that they *will* realize it.

METAPHOR

A metaphor is a comparison that imaginatively identifies one thing with another, dissimilar thing, and transfers or ascribes to the first thing (the tenor or idea) some of the qualities of the second (the vehicle, or image). Unlike a simile or analogy, metaphor asserts that one thing *is* another thing, not just that one is like another. Hence, metaphor achieves its effect through the tension that arises from the act of predication.

In *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, the use of analogy is far more prevalent than that of metaphor. Longchenpa utilizes the Tibetan terms *bzhin*, *ltar*, and *lta bu* ("like," "similar") extensively to illustrate Great Perfection notions by using concrete, or at least accessible, examples. Nevertheless, Longchenpa does use metaphor, i.e., counterintuitive statements of identity, in his text. One of the more striking metaphors is the identification of all appearances and consciounesses with the dynamism, playfulness, and ornamentation of awareness. For instance, Longchenpa states, "Having realized that whatever appearances or consciousnesses manifest are the dynamism and playfulness of awareness, one is embraced by freely operating within the vast open space."[100] Elsewhere he evokes a similar image:

> Whatever appearances may manifest in a dream are bound within the range of sleep and [in fact] are untrue and your own empty self-projections. Similarly, all phenomena that appear in terms of the worldly environment and beings therein or as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are bound by awareness, i.e., the enlightening mind. Since they appear as mind, they are all radiant appearances of absence, and should be recognized as the playfulness of awareness.[101]

Identifying all phenomena, no matter how concrete they may appear, as the "playfulness" or "display" of awareness creates a powerful and strange image that demands a response. Such statements of identity are clearly related to the potent language employed by schools of Indian Buddhism. The statement in the *dasabhumikasutra*, for instance, that, "this triple-world is mind-only" (*cittamatram yad uta traidhatukam*), is a compelling statement in any circumstances, regardless of how exegetes would have us understand it.[102] Similarly outrageous statements in Perfection of Wisdom literature such as "form is emptiness, emptiness is form" (*rūpam sūnyatā sūnyataiva rūpam*) capture our attention and insist on a response.[103]

METONYMY

Metonymy is another form of metaphor, very similar to synecdoche (and, in fact, some rhetoricians do not distinguish between the two), in which a closely associated object is substituted for the object or idea in mind. This is an extremely common device employed in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, as we saw briefly in the discussion of apposition above. The core Great Perfection terms are often glossed or substituted with expressions of the qualities or characteristics of the concept in question, even if the characteristic being identified is the very *absence* of characteristics (*mtshan med*)! Other times, a part or fragment of a larger concept might be used to evoke the totality, as in the case when Longchenpa uses the simple term "awareness" (*rig pa*) to refer to the fuller term "self-emergent awareness" (*rang byung rig pa*), or to "the enlightening mind of awareness" (*rig pa byang chub kyi sems*).

PARAENESIS

Paraenesis is a warning of impending evil, and this is a familiar rhetorical device in Buddhist texts, particularly in those relating to the topic of tantra. Tantra is held to be only for the spiritual elite, and thus must be kept very secret, with dire consequences resulting from any breach in this secrecy. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* represents a self-conscious teaching on the highest aspect of tantra, and therefore it is to be assumed that its contents are to be guarded closely. The fifth and final chapter of the text concerns persons deemed suitable to uphold these teachings. It carefully delineates the categories of candidates for instruction (*gang la gdams pa*), both those to be accepted and those to be rejected, teachers who are qualified to instruct (*gang gis gdams pa*), the character of the instructions themselves (*gang gdams pa*), the manner in which the instructions are to be imparted (*ji ltar gdams pa*), and the benefits of the instruction (*gdams pa'i phan yon*).

Given how dramatic some tantric texts are in their admonitions to keep the subject matter hidden, replete with predictions that protectors of the doctrine will drink one's heartblood, and so forth, Longchenpa's warnings seem surprisingly mild:

> Even if you were to teach the profound to those of inferior fortune, they would not realize it. Since it does not fit inside the heads of narrow-minded people, they end up abandoning the doctrine. Since those on the lower vehicles are addicted to their own philosophical systems, they generate wrong-views. Since those who are

> addicted to doctrines of causation always comprehend everything only through karma and cause and effect, even if you teach them the sky-like doctrine, they view it as a topic about which to argue, exaggerate or deprecate. Therefore, since they are not suitable candidates, it is taught that you must keep this unsurpassed doctrine secret.[104]

Here, Longchenpa does nothing but warn his acolytes not to disclose these esteric doctrines to people who are not spiritually equipped to understand them, but absent is any prediction of calamitous consequences for doing so. Shortly afterwards, however, he cites a passage from the *Heap of Jewels Tantra* that gives a little more specific information about possible retribution for inappropriate dissemination of this information:

> You must not express even the slightest part of these words among those such as Hearers and Solitary Realizers! If you ask why that is, it is because they become nervous and scared, and finally they pass out due to hearing all these words. They have no faith in [doctrines of] Secret Mantra—having given rise to this frame of mind they experience the great hells of sentient beings due to the ripening of that karma. Therefore, by teaching or even by hearing, no propogation of the view should be expressed at all even in a mere gust of wind.[105]

Here the significance of revealing the secrets is somewhat clarified—first, hearing these teachings will induce panic and anxiety in the minds of those who are not suitably prepared to comprehend them, they lose faith in tantric techniques, and finally the fall into hell. The underlying attitude of these warnings appears to be one of compassion, and perhaps a little condescension for those beings not at a sufficiently high level of attainment to appreciate the Great Perfection teachings. Longchenpa cites a passage from *The All-Creating King* that is a little more explicit and ominous in its language in terms of the risks to both the one who teaches and the one who is taught:

> Although acceptance and rejection do not obtain with respect to the essential
> meaning,
> [If you teach this doctrine to unsuitable candidates] Non-humans and demons will
> create obstacles and

For both [teacher and disciple] ḍākiṇis and adepts
Will induce untimely death and fear.
The essential vehicle disappears due to exaggeration and deprecation.
Therefore, avoid all persons of poor spiritual caliber![106]

This passage is less ambiguous or ethereal than the previous citation—disclosing the secrets to unsuitable persons could have disastrous real world effects for both the teacher and disciple such as anxiety, premature death, spirit interference, and so forth. For Tibetans in the the fourteenth century (and indeed up until very recently) this prospect must have had chilling implications, even more so than, perhaps, rebirth in a hell.

The first line of this quotation presents difficulties in its interpretation. Under normal circumstances, if one fails to correctly discriminate between what or whom to accept or reject with regard to the essential meaning, one runs the risk of encountering the mishaps detailed in the latter portion of of the verse. This reading would certainly make sense from a "normal" point of view, but is rendered problematic both by the words themselves, which literally read, "although not abiding [in] acceptance and rejection with respect to the meaning of the nucleus," and by the fact that it is a Great Perfection text. As we have seen time and time again, dualistic categories like "acceptance and rejection" do not obtain from the Great Perfection perspective. Hence, if this reading is correct, it is a strong rhetorical statement, suggesting in fact an exception to the "rule" of spontaneity and freedom.

PARALLELISM

Parallelism refers to recurrent syntactical similarity. In this structural arrangement several parts of a sentence or several sentences are developed and phrased similarly to show that the ideas in the parts or sentences are equal in importance. Parallelism also adds balance and rhythm and, most importantly, clarity to the sentence. In *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* this figure is usually used in tandem with the figures of *anaphora* and *antistrophe* or *epistrophe*. *Anaphora* is the repetition of the same word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences, commonly in conjunction with climax and with parallelism, while *antistrophe* or *epistrophe* forms the counterpart to anaphora, because the repetition of the same word or words comes at the end of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences. Although Longchenpa does not use either of these figures in his verses or commentary in *The Treasury of Abiding Reaity*, they

are often used in the scriptural passages he cites. Because so much of the work is composed of such citations, the stylistic features of these earlier works still make a significant impression on the reader, and hence I think it is valid to consider briefly some of the more prominent examples.

ANAPHORA

An excellent example of *anaphora* is found in a passage from *The Tantra of the Great Self-Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud)*, cited in the introduction to the commentary:

O marvellous transcendent Great Perfection!
It lapses into no position whatsoever; rather
It behaves in a way consonant with self-emergent primordial wisdom.
For example, just as the lion
Overcomes the other beasts of prey with his claws,
The Great Perfection speaks for itself and overcomes the Lesser Vehicles.
The Great Perfection, having spoken its own message, places you in your own reality.
The Great Perfection's sphere has neither Buddhas nor sentient beings;
The Great Perfection's ground has neither good nor bad;
The Great Perfection's path has neither near nor far;
The Great Perfection's fruit is devoid of something to be attained or not attained;
The Great Perfection's gestalt neither "is" nor "is not";
The Great Perfection's speech has neither translation nor non-translation;
The Great Perfection's mind has neither materiality nor differentiations;
The Great Perfection's expanse can neither be consumed nor eradicated;
The Great Perfection's location has neither high nor low;
The Great Perfection's doctrine cannot be implemented nor non-implemented;
The Great Perfection's dynamism/talent (*rtsal*) can neither be perfected nor non-perfected;
The Great Perfection's display involves neither manifestation nor non-manifestation;
The Great Perfection's dimension invloves neither meditation nor non-meditation;
The Great Perfection's awareness is neither exalted nor debased;

The Great Perfection's extremely esoteric primordial wisdom displays in and as everything;

The Great Perfection's limit cannot be indicated by saying: "This";

The Great Perfection's significance has neither words nor letters.

The Great Perfection's royal view abides in suchness.

Experience the inner meaning of the Great Perfection devoid of words and letters.

Devoid of oscillating radiance, of the flow of grasping distorted conceptuality, it naturally arises with an easy force.[107]

Remaining thus in this dimension of the Great Perfection is what is meant by absence.[108]

Besides being an outstanding example of the apophatic rhetoric that characterizes so much of Great Perfection discourse (see below), this passage is also an excellent example of *anaphora.* I have translated this passage in a way that is meant to reflect the Tibetan, which repeats the term "Great Perfection" at the beginning of each successive line for the bulk of the passage as a way of building momentum and having the greatest impact on the reader.

ANTISPTROPHE (EPISTROPHE)

Interestingly, however, translated differently the same lines in this passage could also be used to illustrate the *antistrophe* figure in the present in the original Tibetan. In fact, in terms of rhetorical impact, this figure may well be considered more effective overall, and is certainly more effective in dramatically demonstrating the apophatic cast to the passage. The final word in each of the relevant lines is *med,* the Tibetan word for "non-existence," "absence," "lack," and so forth. Were one to translate the relevant portion of the passage to reflect *this* aspect of the Tibetan, it might look something like this:

In the Great Perfection's sphere, buddhas and sentient beings are absent.

In the Great Perfection's ground, good and evil are absent.

On the Great Perfection's path, near and far are absent.

As for the Great Perfection's fruit, attainment and non-attainment are absent.

In the Great Perfection's gestalt, "is" and "is not" are absent.

In the Great Perfection's speech, translation and non-translation are absent.

In the Great Perfection's mind, materiality and differentiation are absent.

In the Great Perfection's expanse, consumption and eradication are absent.
In the Great Perfection's location, high and low are absent.
In the Great Perfection's doctrine, implementation and non-implementation are absent.
In the Great Perfection's dynamism, perfection and non-perfection are absent.
In the Great Perfection's display, appearance and non-appearance are absent.
In the Great Perfection's dimension, meditation and non-meditation are absent.

Thus, this identical passage can be used to illustrate how the strategies of both *anaphora* and *antistrophe* are deployed in Great Perfection rhetoric. Although these strategies are not much in evidence in Longchenpa's own text, he uses quotations that utilize them so frequently that one almost feels as if they could be analyzed in terms of the text proper.

PARADOX

A paradox is a statement that is self-contradictory on the surface, yet seems to evoke a truth nonetheless. Also, it is a statement that goes against received opinion, thus evoking wonder because it is marvelous, strange, or incredible. Besides *apophasis*, paradox is one of the most prevalent rhetorical straegies used in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. The best example, however, are a series of "adamantine jokes" drawn from the *Heap of Jewels Tantra:*

> Hey enlightened core of Adamantine Speech of all the Buddhas! Look at the view—self-emergent primordial wisdom! It is beyond virtue, vice and the cultivation of views—amazing! Since the ground is unagitated, no matter what physical and verbal activities you have done, you are free from benefit or harm! Ha Ha!
>
> Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the abiding reality of the final character of all things! These appearances do not change even one hair, and do not change their color—amazing! However much you may imagine pleasure and pain, in reality nothing will ever change! Ha Ha!
>
> Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the primordial wisdom of universal origins—the great emptiness! No matter how many various activities of mindfulness and thinking you have done, they manifest as the play of awareness—amazing!

However many of these activities you have done, within the matrix of the unborn, freedom is unobstructed! Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech yourself! Listen up again! Look at the primordial wisdom that is all pervasive—the emptiness of reality! It is abides together with the unborn [emptiness] from the very beginning—amazing! Although a person, having raised aloft a sharp sword, may slay several beings with a single stroke, the continuum of that person is completely free from benefit and harm. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the primordial wisdom—the universal presencing of your own empty cognition! All appearances, howsoever they may appear, manifest as your friends—amazing! Whatever appears has never wavered from your own grounding. Ha Ha!

Hey enlightened core of Adamantine Speech! Look at the lighting up of empty awareness in which all is freedom. Your neuroses are their own best remedy—amazing! The distorted emotions fall away of their own accord! Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the essence of the empty awareness in which everything is pure! Without striving and exertion, the fruit is found within oneself—amazing! By taking hold of this unitary awareness, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety are cleansed of duality.[iii] [43]

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the home (tshang) that is the universal ground—the great empty essence! The six types of transmigrators light up as the three spritual gestalts—amazing! Without those transmigrators having done the slightest bit of meditation, they are simultaneously enlightened. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the fruit wherein the great empty three spiritual gestalts are complete from the beginning! The three times are in a seamless continuity—amazing! Without practicing the six transcendental perfections, the accumulations are completed in a single moment. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the universal sameness of the great emptiness revealed when you nakedly let be within awareness! All the performance of

> activities manifests as the ornamentation of awareness—amazing!’” Everything that one tries to adopt or discard fall away within the view. Ha Ha!
>
> Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the great primordial emptiness—the emptiness of emptiness! All the Buddhas are present in the abyss of saṃsāra—amazing! You fall into the abyss by way of goal oriented meditation. Ha Ha!
>
> Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the concretized notion of emptiness that is actually a non-emptiness!’” A vehicle that holds absence to be a self—amazing! They hope to attain the unborn through production!’” Ha Ha!

The first and perhaps most obvious example of paradox employed in this extended citation is the radical claim that since the Great Perfection view is beyond all virtue and vice, then one is free from harm regardless of whatever activities one has engaged in. Another pointed paradox is the claim that regardless of whatever meditation or "mindfulness" practice one may have performed, they were nothing other than the play of awareness, and hence were no particular help in achieving ever-higher spiritual levels. Probably the most dramatic image among these "jokes" is that of the mass-murderer who will never experience any retribution, good or bad, from this deed. Such a claim flies in the face of normative Buddhist ethical norms and categories, which are based on the theory of karma and the underlying principle of cause and effect. The claim that one's own distorted emotions and neuroses being their own best remedy runs counter to all our conditioning and intuition.

PLEONASM

Pleonasm is the practice of using more words than required to express an idea; being redundant. Normally a vice, it is done on purpose on rare occasions for emphasis. From one point of view, almost the entire *Treasury of Abiding Reality* can be seen as pleonastic. One of the clearest examples of this device is drawn from the introductory section of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality:*

> When the glorious All Good, having enlightened all phenomena into the primordial ground, dwells in the indestructible expanse in the manner of great equality, he turns the unsurpassed Dharma-wheel of definitive meaning. The supreme fruit of these turnings of the wheel is the great secret in which awareness, the enlightening mind, the Reality Gestalt, the suchness beyond affirmation and

> negation, transformation or change, is taught in direct immediacy as transcending causal networks driven by striving and accomplishment.[114]

We have seen this example used above to illustrate other related strategies of accumulation, aposition, and repetition. Here we find a straightforward example of pleonasm in which Longchenpa glosses a term with several other equivalent terms when he equates "awareness," "the enlightening mind," the "Reality Gestalt," and "the suchness beyond affirmation and negation, transformation or change." These expressions stand in apposition to each other, and are more or less synonomous, and hence redundant. Nevertheless, in repeating them in succession, Longchenpa achieves the rhetorical aim of refining and deepening the audience's understanding of the notion he is trying to convey with layer upon layer of nuance.

As we look deeper into the tropes and strategies employed by Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, the Tibetan literary convention of copious scriptural citation and seemingly endless pleonasm will become evident. It would be easy to mistake such slavish adherence to traditional sources as an indication of a lack of originality, and indeed in many cases it may well be just that. But in the case of Longchenpa's writings in general, and *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* particularly, it is quite clear that that the author transcends the constraints of the genre and overcomes the tyranny of tradition, however rich and nuanced the source materials may be in and of themselves.

The device of pleonasm is sufficiently similar to substitution, i.e., replacing one word with another whose meaning is close enough to the former that the former could, in its turn, be a substitute for the latter (*acaloutha*), or substituting one word with another whose meaning is very close to the original, but in a non-reciprocal fashion (*anacaloutha*), that we need not give further examples to illustrate it here.

RHETORICAL QUESTION (EROTESIS)

Rhetorical question (erotesis) differs from hypophora in that it is not answered by the writer, because its answer is obvious or obviously desired, and usually just a yes or no. It is used for effect, emphasis, or provocation, or for drawing a conclusionary statement from the facts at hand. Longchenpa frequently employs this device as a menas to state the obvious and perhaps for mild comic effect as well. In the following example, drawn from his root verses, he calls

many hallowed Buddhist principles into question by undercutting causal and ethical assumptions concerning enlightenment:

> **As for the penetrating awareness, the enlightened nucleus of all meaning,**
> **Since it is devoid of fabrication, virtue has never been of any benefit.**
> **Since it is devoid of change, sin has never inflicted any harm.**
> **Since it is devoid the effects of karma, there is no maturation of karma—pleasure and pain.**
> **Since it is devoid of good and evil, there is nothing to abandon or take up—saṃsāra or nirvāṇa.**
> **Since it cannot be conceptualized or verbalized, it is just free from having an origin.**
> **Since it is devoid of anteriority and posteriority, the succession of lifetimes is a mere designation.**
> **What is appropriated at all? Who revolves? Where?**
> **What karma? What is its effect or maturation?**
> **Ponder and analyze the space-like dimension.**[115]

Awareness, as it is discussed in Great Perfection literature, is beyond all temporal and ethical constraints, and hence is pristine and primordial. If that is the case, how is it even possible to discuss it in terms of cause and effect? Who cycles in saṃsāra? Who attains nirvāṇa? Where do any of these fictitious events take place?

As we have seen in other examples, Longchenpa also freely draws from scriptural sources in his rhetorical evocations, and the rhetorical question is no exception. Here, in a passage from *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)*, Longchenpa points out how ridiculous it is that, despite the fact that awarenessis all pervasive and ubiquitous, ordinary people are not able to perceive it with their senses:

> The quintessence of the esoteric precepts that epitomizes the ultra-secret,
> Is naturally resonant without interruption. And yet
> No one has heard even this!
> Do they have an ear sense faculty, or what?!

The scent of the in-dwelling expanse and awareness,
There is no occasion when you are separated from it—it surrounds and envelops
you—
And yet no one has sensed this! Are their noses clogged?!

The flavor of the unified esoteric precepts on the three quintessential elixirs
Are primordially the quintessence of the body and mind, and yet
No one has tasted just this! Have their tongues been cut off?!

The inherently pure appearances adorned with color
Are not separate from your own body—
Like the body and its shadow—
Are present without night and day, and yet
No one has felt this! Are their bodies just inert matter?![116]

Thus Longchenpa employs this quote to humurously point to the absurdity of our situation. An experience of enlightenment is right in front of our faces, but we cannot recognize even this most immediate reality. How preposterous!

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This lengthy catalogue of rhetorical devices, tropes, and so forth, is meant to provide concrete examples of several of the more important strategies Longchenpa uses in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. While not exhaustive, it should be enough to demonstrate not only the range of rhetorical possibilities available to him, but his mastery of several genres as well. Thus this subsection is intended to give some sense of the scope and the mechanics of the stylistics utilized in this specific text.

In this section we see the beginnings of patterns and relationships between some of the various rhetorical figures as well. These rhetorical matrices allow Longchenpa to develop themes that better allow him to show the coherence of his vision. We have seen in the preceding discussion, for example, how the he uses the complex of metaphors relating to space in concert to achive a more dramatic rhetorical effect. The tropes and metaphors that comprise these matrices often take on specific or relational meanings depending on the context in which they are used. One of the key metaphors of this complex is that of the mythical "khyung" bird,

and it is no different in this respect. Taking the important "khyung" trope as a case in point, in the following section I will tease out its possible meanings as it is used in various literary contexts in the Nyingma Tradition.

THE "KHYUNG" METAPHOR: A CASE STUDY

What follows is a case study of the history of one of the most prevalent metaphors deployed in Great Perfection writings and in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, that of the mythical "khyung" bird. This metaphor is particularly interesting in that it exists across two tantric traditions (Mahāyoga and Great Perfection), and thus shows how strikingly different a single metaphor can be across disparate traditions. This fact points to the fact that rhetoric, metaphors, and so forth, cannot have intrinsic meaning—they mean different things in different contexts. This is not to say that such metaphors are merely empty cipers—certain kinds of rhetoric will have certain kinds of predispositions—but it is up to oneself to ascertain how they are used in any given context. Rhetorical characteristics do not possess some intrinsic connection to a particular social matrix or biographical detail, yet neither are the purely empty of associations either. Thus, depending on the context, the metaphor of the great legendary "khyung" is not exclusively a grand symbol of the majesty and freedom attained through Great Perfection practices, it is a terrifying symbol of violence and subjugation as well.

Longchenpa appears to draw his second group of four semantic categories in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* directly from a much earlier work of Great Perfection philosophy entitled *The Sky-Soaring Great Khyung* by Śri Siṃha (ca. seventh-eighth centuries).[117] This aphoristic philosophical poem focuses on the legendary *khyung* bird, a favorite image in Great Perfection literature. The great *khyung* is endowed with an immense wingspan, supernatural powers of flight and vision, and the ability of its young to burst through the confines of the egg and fly immediately; it serves as a metaphor for the superiority of the Great Perfection over other schools of thought.

Tibetan literature is filled with references to the mythological bird known as the *khyung*. In general the *khyung* is explained as being the Tibetan translation for the Sanskrit term garuḍa, the mount of the god Viṣṇu and the sworn enemy of nāgas. In the purāṇic literature, the garuḍa is said to have hatched fully-grown from its egg and immediately to have taken to the skies, overpowering other creatures with its strength and effulgence. The theme of a powerful

bird with a strong sense of enmity for snakes is a trans-cultural phenomenon found in ancient Greek, Sumerian, Persian, Chinese, and Indian cultures. Variations of the garuḍa's artistic representations are found throughout Asia, including India, Nepal, Śri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Southeast Asia. The garuḍa is commonly evoked in these countries to ward off snakes, snakebites, and various poisons, and so forth.

In Tibet the figure of the garuḍa was assimilated to the *khyung*—a great bird explained in early Tibetan oral traditions as being impossible to snare.[118] References to the *khyung* are frequently found throughout Tibetan literature, assuming perhaps the greatest prominence in the *rdzogs chen* traditions of the rNying-ma and Bön traditions. Indeed many *rdzogs chen* texts dating from at least the eighth-tenth centuries contain references to the *khyung* in their titles. Such references in the *sems sde* literature may reflect the "khyung" of pre-Buddhist Tibet more than they do notions of the pan-Indian garuḍa, and may well have served as the inspiration for later authors such as kLong-chen rabs-'byams-pa (1308-1363) in his *Khyung chen gshog rdzogs*, and Zhabs-dkar tshogs-drug rang-grol (1781-1850/1) in his *mkha' lding gshog rlabs*.[119]

A particularly strong concentration of these texts is found in the canonical collection of Nyingma Tantras known as the *Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. The "khyung" texts in this collection fall within two distinct categories: those relating to Great Perfection, and particularly "Mind Series" traditions, and those relating to the Mahāyoga traditions. At first glance, the concentrations of these two sub-groupings appears to be characterized by a more literary or aphoristic orientation in the case of the former, and an emphasis on ritual and subjugation of various negative forces in the case of the latter.

Most mainstream editions of the *Collected Tantras of the Ancients* were redacted in the fifteenth century, and there is some evidence that earlier proto-editions about which we know little or nothing.[120] It may be, for instance, that the *bai ro rgyud 'bum* represents one such early redaction, or that "Ancient Tantras" (*rnying rgyud*) sections of certain editions of the *bka' 'gyur* and *bstan 'gyur* represent some form of early redaction. At any rate, we can say that the *Collected Tantras of the Ancients* is a pre-sixteenth century compilation of translated materials from three distinct tantric traditions that were excluded from the mainstream Tibetan canon of Indian Buddhist materials. While the materials included within it were clearly in public

circulation prior to the fifteenth century, its dating is complicated by the fact that the tradition asserts all its texts to be pre-ninth century in origin.

Śrī Siṃha's text, though brief, was extremely influential and most likely formed the basis for Longchenpa's use of this fourfold imagery. Although Śrī Siṃha's remarks on these four are somewhat oblique, Longchenpa himself deduces this interpretation in his *Treasury of Words and Meanings*, which he then further elaborates in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Longchenpa explains his interpretation of three out of the four categories in *The Treasury of Words and Meanings*:

> The triad of 'passing judgement,' 'confining within the nexus,' and 'binding into fetters' is an exceedingly profound key to the break-though practice of the Great Perfection, and hence the Great Master [Śrīsiṃha] spoke on them for the sake of future generations.[121]

Here we begin to see the development of Longchenpa's understanding of these highly charged terms in a text that was unquestionably composed years before the composition of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Hence, although this precise terminology does not occur in Śrīsiṃha's text, we can clearly see their genesis there. In addition, these categories are clearly the building blocks for the sixteenfold structure of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, to which we will turn in greater detail shortly.

The influence of Śrīsiṃha's work on Longchenpa's corpus is evident elsewhere as well. Longchenpa himself, for instance, expands on the metaphor of the powerful bird in a short text entitled *The Full Fledged Khyung-chen Bird (khyung chen gshog rdzogs)*, clearly a homage of sorts to Śrīsiṃha.[122] In fact, the image of the great *khyung* bird is found in a number of texts and sections of texts associated with the Mind Series. As pervasive as the "khyung" metaphor is in Mind Series literature, however, it is even more evident in the Mahāyoga portion of the *Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. And, whereas the figure of the "khyung" evokes images of grandeur, freedom, spontaneity, vision, and power in the Great Perfection sources, it is an image exclusively associated with the violent suppression of various negatives forces in the Mahāyoga materials, thus demonstrating its polysemic characteristic. Among its most notable instances in the canon are the following:

1. CHAPTER 22 OF THE *KUN BYED RGYAL PO*[123]

This chapter of the *kun byed rgyal po*, entitled "The non-Localized Dimension" (*mi gnas yul*), is actually the *khyung chen lding ba*, a short tantra included within several of the versions of the 18 Texts of the Mind-Series (*sems sde bco brgyad*). Large portions of the text are also included in the second chapter of *khyung chen gyi rgyud* to which we will turn our attention in a moment. Although this text has the word "khyung" in the title, in fact its development of the theme of the *khyung* and related metaphors is negligible. There exists an interesting commentary to this text whose authorship is unclear, although it has been suggested that it may have been composed by gNubs sangs-rgyas ye-shes (ca. 10th-11th cent.), entitled *rdzogs pa chen po khyung chen ldings pa'i 'grel pa*. This commentary is noteworthy for its interpretation of this text of the *sems sde* tradition in terms of epistemological categories and terminology.

2. CHAPTER NINE OF *LA ZLO GSANG BA'I 'KHOR LO*[124]

This chapter, entitled *lta ba khyung chen ldings pa'i dgons pa la bzla ba*, is a valuable source for thematic figures of speech relating directly the *khyung*. For instance, it employs the images of the *khyung* soaring in space with perfect power, and thus is free from "projection" (*spro ba*) or "contraction" (*bsdu ba*). The baby *khyung* breaks free of the shell of its egg in a single movement, and is thus immediately equal in stature to its mother (*ma dang mnyam pa*). It exerts dominion over space (*mkha' la dbang sgyur*). These analogies are then thematically developed to illustrate how the *rdzogs chen* practitioner is to conduct herself, neither attempting to develop nirvāṇa or the Dharma, nor to constrain saṃsāra or conceptuality (*rtog pa*). Similarly, the *rdzogs chen* practitioner is said to break free of the confines of the egg of appearances (*snang ba*), physicality (*lus*), and ego-fixation (*bdag 'dzin*).

3. *BYANG CHUB KYI SEMS KHYUNG CHEN GYI RGYUD*[125]

The translation of this tantra is attributed to Śrisiṁha and the Tibetan translator Vairocana. This is a ten-chapter work and its topics range widely. These include some of the following: the virtual identity of mind and phenomena, the absence of any "method" for becoming enlightened other than the realization of the text's authentic meaning, "natural" meditation, and so forth. These are also themes common to many other significant *sems sde* texts. The specific tropes relating to the *khyung* theme in this text include references to the ability of *khyung* chicks, lion cubs, and baby princes to subjugate in the manner of overcoming the bonds

of the womb. Also, when the *khyung* spreads its wings to their full extent it flies without any sense of attachment or fixation to the sky (*mkha' la mi chags*). The baby *khyung* can extend its entire body within its egg before birth (*khyung phrug sgo nga'i nang nas lus rgyas*). The *khyung* dwells neither in space nor on the ground (*khyung chen nam mkhar mi gnas sa la mi gnas*). The *khyung* has a large body and is fully fledged from birth, and as such complete form the beginning without seeking for something outside itself. The flight of the *khyung* leave no trace in the sky (*bya lam rjes med*).

4. CHAPTER 60 OF *NYI ZLA KHA SBYOR SENG GE SGRA YI DGONGS PA BSHAD PA'I RGYUD*[126]

This very brief chapter, entitled *khyung chen gshog rdzogs dgongs pa*, devotes itself to an explanation of how practitioners err by trying to assign notions of causality to reality and seeing the phenomenal world as something external to themselves. This is followed by an explanation of the qualities of the *chos dbyings*, *chos sku*, *byang chub kyi sems*, and so forth. This language, while extremely common to *sems sde* literature, contains no explicit references to the figure of the *khyung*, and only two references to the tangentially related metaphor of "space" (*nam mkha'*). Stylistically, it is very similar to the second chapter of the *'phags pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i mdo* discussed below, sharing with it many identical expressions. It may, in fact, represent either an earlier or later version of the latter somewhat longer textual fragment.

5. CHAPTER 2 OF *RDO RJE GSANG BA CHEN PO'I SKU RIN PO CHE DBYIG GI SGRON MA SHES RAB CHEN PO'I MDO*[127]

This chapter, entitled *'dab chags kyi rgyal po khyung lta bu'i gdams pa*, concerns a prophecy made by Vajradhara to Vajrapaṇi about a text concealed in China, and represents a stylistic departure from the more aphoristic character of the preceding texts insofar as it is almost entirely narrative in structure and content. Only the closing section of this text makes any remarks that might be construed as being aphoristic in character, and there is no implicit or explicit reference to the *khyung* or related metaphors. It may also be significant that the site where the text is said to have been concealed is explicitly identified with Hwa-shang Mahāyana (*ha sha ma hā ya na kyi gnas*). This suggests, perhaps, the connection between this quasi-historical figure and early forms of *rdzogs chen*, and the strong possibility that this text is a Tibetan composition rather than a translation.

6. *LTA BA KHYUNG CHEN LDING BA'I RGYUD*[128]

The Tantra of the Soaring Great Khyung's View (*lta ba khyung chen lding ba'i rgyud*) has several unusual and interesting references to the figure of the *khyung*. In particular, it identifies the "real" or "actual" *khyung* (*don gyi khyung*) as one who "soars in Reality's Expanse" (*chos kyi dbyings na lding*). It goes on to show how this actual soaring *khyung* experiences no anxiety whatsoever (*gang la nyam nga med*) with regard to normative Buddhist categories. These include rubrics such as esoteric instructions (*man ngag*), conduct (*spyod pa*), tantric commitments (*dam tshig*), enlightened activities (*'phrin las*), meditation (*sgom pa*), compassion (*thugs rje*), and cause and effect (*rgyu 'bras*). Another striking mythological detail is revealed in this tantra when it refers to the *khyung* as possessing six wings (*gshog drug*). The only other similar reference to the *khyung's* six wings occurs just once in the *rig pa rang shar* tantra.[129]

7. CHAPTER 2 OF *'PHAGS PA GSANG SNGAGS CHEN PO BSAM GYIS MI KHYAB PA'I MDO*[130]

As I mentioned earlier, this chapter, entitled *khyung chen gshog rdzogs kyi dgongs pa bstan pa*, is stylistically very similar to the second chapter of the *seng ge sgra yi dgongs pa* discussed above. It is a longer work, and hence more elaborate and detailed. It draws on standard *sems sde* language and imagery in its metaphysical assertions, and like the *seng ge sgra*, does not contain a single explicit reference to the *khyung* except when referring to the title or a particular meditative state that the Buddha entered into.

8. CHAPTER 67 OF *DPAL ZLA GSANG NAG PO'I RGYUD*[131]

With this chapter, entitled "Chapter on the Yellow *Khyung* Bird" (*bya khyung ser ba*), we enter into an examination of texts belonging to the Mahāyoga class of rNying-ma Tantras. There is a marked difference between texts identified as *rdzogs chen* or *sems sde* and those affiliated with Mahāyoga. Generally speaking, texts associated with the *sems sde* class tend to be extremely aesthetic, aphoristic, relying on literary images and figures of speech to convey a sense of meditative experience or metaphysical truth. Mahāyoga texts, on the other hand, tend to be more concerned with ritual, ceremony, and other more pragmatic matters. In the case of this specific chapter/text, we find what amounts to a *khyung* sādhana that describes the provenance of the practice, the detailed manner in which one is to visualize the *khyung*, mantra recitation, mudrā-s, and finally imagining that one has slain snakes, nāgas, and other harmful animals.

9. CHAPTER 5 OF *DPAL PADMA DBANG CHEN DREGS PA ZIL GNON GYI RGYUD*[132]

This chapter, entitled *gshog pa khams gsum rnam par rgyal ba'i dkyil 'khor by khyung klu 'dul ba,* describes a *khyung gtor ma* offering by which conceptuality is eliminated (*rtog pa'i phang yang gcod par byed*), those who do harm are pulverized with a vajra (*gnod par byed pa rdo rjes brdung*), cruelty and attachment are burned in a fire (*gdug rtsub zhen chags me la sreg*), spirits and powerful nāgas are trained (*sa bdag klu gnyan zhen chags sbyong*), and so forth. Finally, it gives instructions on how to recite mantras and assemble offerings and then finishes with a poetic description of how the "support of the view" (*lta ba'i 'degs*) is adorned with vajra-wings, and the smile (*?'dzum*) of conduct is adorned with jeweled wings.

10. CHAPTER 17 OF *KHRO BO RTA MCHOG ROL PA*[133]

This chapter, entitled "Utilizing the Fire *Khyung*" (*me'i khyung bkol ba*), describes the 360 million terrifying fire-*khyung*-s emerging for the crown of the Buddha dPal padma'i gar-gyi-dbang-phyug and a similar number arising from elsewhere. All these *khyung* possess blazing claws and beaks and are accompanied with blazing light. This is followed by the emergence of an immeasurable mass of nāgas from a mountain. Next, dPal padma'i gar-gyi-dbang-phyug recites a mantra of subjugation that causes the world and all its elements to shake and catch on fire, poisons to become completely subdued (*gang gis gdug pa 'dul bya ba*), the fire-pits (for fire pūjas) to be smeared with blood (*ho khung khrag gis byug*), and performs the "battle" mudrā (*'khrug byed kyi phyag rgya*) causing lightning to strike.

11. CHAPTER 17 OF *KHRO BO RTA MCHOG ROL PA'I RGYUD*[134]

This chapter appears to be simply a repetition of the previous citation.

12. *RDO RJE KHYUNG GI SNYING PO SROG GI RTSA BA'I RGYUD.*[135]

The content of this four-chapter tantra is largely mythological and ritual in character. It begins with the bodhisattva bDud-rtsi 'khyil-pa requesting Buddha rDo-rje gtum-po to protect sentient beings from the oppression of *sa bdag*s and nāgas. rDo-rje gtum-po replies with the advice that a certain mantra will overcome the nāgas and pacify their malevolence. Next bDud-rtsi 'khyil-pa requests the Buddha to explicate the *khyung gi rtsa ba'i rgyud*. Here we are informed that rDo-rje gtum-po and the *khyung* are the same in essence, but only appear to be different. This is then followed with specific instructions on how the practitioner is to proceed in the manner of a sādhana. He or she is to amass agreeable gifts (*yid dang mthun par yo byad bsag*), draw a *khyung*

maṇḍala (*khyung gi maṇḍala bri ba*), construct fire-pits for the four types of enlightened activity within the triangular maṇḍala (*'phrin las bzhi yis 'brub khung bya*), generate oneself as rDo-rje gtum-po from the syllable *hūṃ* (*bdag nyid hūṃ las gtum po bskyed*). One next accumulates the external, internal, and secret offering substances (*phyi nang gsang ba'i mchod rdzas bsag*), and then emanates rDo-rje gtum-po-s from the *hūṃ* at one's heart. After the merit from this activity have been collected, one meditates on emanational black *khyungs* are generated out of the emptiness in the heart of rDo-rje gtum-po, and then recites appropriate mantras. The next chapters concern the procedures for the concluding fire rituals and advice on suppression and wrathful activities.

13. *RDO RJE KHYUNG NAG GSANG BA RIN PO CHE'I RGYUD.*[136]

This tantra, translated by Vasudhara and rDo-rje-yang dbang-gter, is also framed with mythological narrative components. The bodhisattva Vajrapaṇi requests instruction on the meaning of the *khyung* from Buddha Vajradhara In order to benefit all beings afflicted by the poisonous harm of nāgas and other creatures,. Vajradhara then replies with an elaborate description of the *khyung's* fearsome attributes such as its beak made of indestructible meteorite metal (*gnam lcags rdo rje'i mchu*), it surveys the entire world (*'jig rten khams kun g.yogs par khebs*), it holds *sa bdags* and nāgas in its claws (*sder mos sa bdag klu gnyan 'dzin*), wrathful mantras are emitting from its mouth (*zhal nas sngags zer drag po 'phro*), and so forth. Then follows a chapter on mantra recitation including mantras for application of activities (*las la sbyar ba'i sngags*), taming the extremes (*mtha' btul ba*), churning the waters (*chu mig dkrug pa*), offering torma (*gtor ma dbul ba*), and averting nāgas (*klu log na bzlog pa'i sngags*). Other sections of interest deal with advice for the practitioner on how to praise and exhort the *khyung*, and encouragement to practitioners to eschew conceptuality by not being concerned with pleasant and unpleasant forms, but rather adhere to one's own meditative stabilization.

14. *RDO RJE GTUM PO GSANG BA RIN PO CHE KHYUNG NAG TU SPRUL PA'I RGYUD*[137]

This text is also translated by Vasudhara and rDo-rje-yang dbang-gter. It possesses eight chapters on topics such as taming the nāgas (*klu gnyan btul bal*), practice (*sgrub pa*), wrathful activities (*drag po'i las*), torma offerings (*gtor ma*), praise and exhortation (*bstod cing bkul ba*), and upholding the tantra (*rgyud yongs su bzung ba*). Of particular interest are some of the components of the "practice" section, which include self-generation as rDo-rje gtum-po,

meditative generation of the *khyung*, invocation and offering of the torma cake, recitation of the wrathful mantras for destroying, binding, tying, killing and subduing the nāgas, and so forth. The chapter on "praise and exhortation" also includes some interesting epithets for the *khyung* such as "supreme among sorcerers" (*mthu chen kun gyi nang na mchog*), "tamer of the hosts of malevolent yakṣas" (*gnod sbyin gdug pa'i tshogs rnams ma lus 'dul*), "protector of all transmigrators from all yakṣas" (*gnod sbyin kun las 'gro ba thams cad skyob*), "subduer of all obstructing spirits" (*bgegs rnams 'jom mdzad pa*), and "the god who bestows all siddhis" (*siddhi thams cad stsol ba'i lha*), among others.

15. *RDO RJE KHYUNG NAG GI RGYUD YANG SNYING RTSA BA'I MAN NGAG*[138]

This text appears to be simply a repetition (with minor variations) of the *rdo rje khyung gi snying po srog gi rtsa ba'i rgyud* cited above.

16. *GSANG BA DON 'DUS PHYAG NA RDO RJE KHYUNG DANG BCAS PA'I RGYUD*[139]

This ten-chapter text (again translated by Vasudhara and rDo-rje-yang dbang-gter) starts by describing the "lord of secrets," Vajrapani, blazing with strength and power, as the combination of all the Buddhas of the three times in his pure-land. At that time, he had subjugated all the malevolent (nāgas) of the heavens and earth, and then entered into the samadhi called "subduing the nāgas and *sa bdag*s of the netherworld" (*srid pa sa 'og gi klu gnyan dang sa bdag 'dul ba'i ting nge 'dzin*). Then he traveled to the city of the nāgas where he filled the sky with emanated bodies, and five different types of *khyung*, associated with the body, speech, mind, qualities, and enlightened activity of blazing wisdom, respectively. In so doing he was able to subdue the nāgas and *sa bdag*s of the netherworld, and members of the various castes as well. This left only the most difficult nāgas and spirits to be subjugated, which Vajrapani then does through emanating furious *khyung* birds. At this point the dialogue between bDud-rtsi 'khyil-pa and rDo-rje gtum-po commences. The former requests the latter to explain the enlightened activity that is the play of his compassion (*nyid kyi thugs rje'i rol pa chen po'i 'phrin las*). rDo-rje gtum-po explains 1) protection (from?) the nāga's poison (*klu'i gdug bsrung ba*), and 2) drawing out the nāga's poison (*klu'i gdug dbyung ba*). He then gives bDud-rtsi 'khyil-pa mantras for eradicating various sorts of poisons.

In the next chapter rDo-rje gtum-po explains how human beings should employ the "wheel of five concentrations" (*bsam gtan rnam lngai''khor lo bsgom*) to avert harm done by nāgas and *sa*

bdag. Next the practitioner is instructed to generate the intention to become enlightened (*sems bskyed*), obtain the requisite empowerment (*dbang*) and permission (*rjes gnang*), and then to meditate on rDo-rje gtum-po. While doing such meditation one is to concentrate on a black *khyung* at the heart. The *khyung* has wings marked with vajras and its talons hold nāgas and *sa bdag*. Finally, having invoked the "wisdom beings" (*ye shes pa*) and received initiation from them, one is instructed to recite the root and essence mantras.

Next bDud-rtsi 'khyil-pa requests rDo-rje gtum-po to gradually explain the method for curing those seized by illnesses induced by poisons, to which the latter responds that the recitation of the root mantra is the most effective cure. Following chapters describe specific methods to cope with those occasions when demons seize one's tongue, or when one is unable to digest food, inability to retain semen, and the inability of Hindus to cure these ailments decisively. Finally, bDud-rtsi 'khyil-pa and the retinue are satisfied and delighted by the teaching, and praise it lavishly, whereupon rDo-rje gtum-po exhorts them to preserve the tantra for the sake of human beings in the future.

17. *RDO RJE KHYUNG NAG GI RGYUD RIN PO CHE'I SPRUL PA*[140]

As in the previous text, Vajrpani emanates five *khyung* to subjugate five types of nāgas, whereupon Vajrapani himself emanates as a *khyung* and smashes all the remaining nāgas (*klu thams cad brlag par gyur*). Then a dialogue between bDud-rsti 'khyil-pa and rDo-rje gtum-po commences in which the former requests the latter to protect all beings who are afflicted with nāga poison. rDo-rje gtum-po responds by entering into samadhi and reciting a mantra, whereby all malevolent nāgas and *sa bdag* are pulverized (*rdul du brlag pa*). bDud-rtsi 'khyil-pa then requests rDo-rje gtum-po to protect those nāgas and *sa bdag* who harm humans (*gro ba mi la gnod pa*). rDo-rje gtum-po explains that there are two methods to cure diseases induced by nāga poison, one through the use of mantras (*sngags kyis gso ba*), and one through the use of substances (*rdzas kyis gso ba*). These substances include dog spittle (*khyi lud*), the hair of a dead man (*mi shi'i skra*), musk (*gla rtsi*), burnt animal horn (*ra gzhob*), a peacock feather (*rma bya'i mdongs*), deadly poison (*btsan dug*), effigies (*tshabs chung*), and so forth.

18. *RDO RJE BYA KHYUNG GSANG BA RIN PO CHE 'KHROS PA SPRUL PA'I RGYUD*[141]

This tantra, also translated by Vasudhara, also begins with rDo-rje gtum-po emanating a series of *khyung* in order to subdue a host of malevolent beings. bDud-rtsi 'khyil-pa then requests an

explanation of whatever may have been omitted (*kha skongs*) from the earlier and later tantras. rDo-rje gtum-po responds with specific instructions on how to slay the various "castes" (*rigs*) of nāgas such as the brahmin (*bram ze'i rigs*), kṣatriya (*rgyal rigs*), vaiśya (*rje'u rigs*), śudra (*dmangs rigs*), and outcaste (*gdol pa'i rigs*).

19. *GTUM PO CHEN PO MA RUNGS PA RDO RJE KHYUNG DANG BCAS PA DON 'DUS PA GSANG BA'I RGYUD CHEN PO'I DON BTUS PA*[142]

This text concerns the particular methods for freeing members of the individual castes from the grip of malevolent *sa bdag* and nāgas. The various techniques mentioned include various wrathful rituals, mantra recitation, meditation on oneself as a god (*lha sgom*), torma offering (*gtor ma sbyin*), application of spittle (*mchil ma gdags*), and so forth.

20. CHAPTER 7 OF THE *RDO RJE GTSUG LAG 'KHOR LO GSUM PA'I RGYUD CHEN PO*[143]

This brief chapter, entitled *rdo rje khyung chen 'khor lo bstan pa*, appears to be an enumeration of categories, the import of which is not immediately clear to me. At first glance, these appear to be a terse enumeration of different *khyung* emanations and/or variations.

21. CHAPTERS 21, 22, AND 23 OF *'PHAGS PA RDO RJE GTSUG LAG GI 'KHOR LO'I RGYUD CHEN PO*[144]

These chapters, entitled *rdo rje khyung chen gtsug lag gi thems bshad pa*, *rdo rje khyung chen gi tshad ma brgyad pa*, and *rdo rje khyung chen gtsug lag gi rtsis bshad pa* respectively.

In the first chapter Vajrapani asks Samantabhadra to explain the esoteric practices (*'khrul 'khor*) of the great vajra *khyung*. Samantabhadra replies that it is very good (*rab tu legs*) that Vajrapani made this request for the benefit of future persons, and thus he will explain the meanings of the "wheel." First he explains that there are 500,000 classes of *khyung*, comprised of groups of 100,000 each for the categories of enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities. The wheels of the three enlightened bodies, i.e., the *chos sku*, *long sku*, and *sprul sku*, are marked with precious jewels (*nor bu rin chen*), crossed vajras (*rdo rje rgya gram*), and variegated lotuses (*padma sna tshogs*) respectively. These are further divided into extensive, middling and low, consisting of ten, eight, and four categories respectively. The first's ten categories are peace (*zhi*), increase (*rgyas*), power (*dbang*), wrath (*drag*), summoning (*dgug*), dispelling (*bskrad*), separating (*dbye*), suppression (*gnan*), confounding (*dkrug*), and escaping insanity (*smyo 'bros*). The second's eight categories are summoning, dispelling, casting (?*gdab*),

separation, suppression, killing (*bsad*), and imprisoning (*brub*). The third's four categories are peace, increase, power, and wrath. This chapter continues with such spiritual calculations.

The next chapter begins with a discussion of the enumeration of authenticity (*tshad ma*). Initially this category is divided into two: common (*thun mong pa*) and special (*khyad par*). Each has five subdivisions.

22. THE *RDO RJE KHYUNG GTSUG LAG 'KHOR LO'I RGYUD.*[145]

The object of homage in this short text (5 folios) is *khro rgyal mkha' lding rgyal po*. It begins with Vajrapaṇi making offerings to Samantabhadra, who is then roused to address Vajrapaṇi and the assembly of khyungs on the various classifications of enlightened activity. He states that the hundreds of thousands of "khyung" tantras (*khyung gi rgyud chen 'bum sde rnams*) are differentiated by means of the three "keys" (*lde mig*) of "completeness" (*thems*), "authenticity" (*tshad ma*), and "enumeration" (*rtsis*). The first is identified as the key relating to the *cakras* (*'khor lo*), the second as relating to *mantra* (*sngags*), and the last as relating to esoteric instructions (*man ngag*).

23. CHAPTER 6 OF THE *RDO RJE GTSUG LAG DRAG PO NGAN SNGAGS ME LONG RNAM PAR BKOD PA 'KHOR LO GZER GYI RGYUD*[146]

This obscure chapter appears to concern the placement of certain visualized syllables on the figure of the *khyung* in union with his consort (*yab yum*).

24. CHAPTERS 12, 20, 27, 67, 138 OF *DRAG PO BRTSEGS PA DGONGS PA LUNG BSTAN PA'I RGYUD*[147]

These extremely short chapters each comprise a prophecy (*lung bstan*) pertaining to the activities of the *khyung*. Chapter 12 relates to the intention of the primordial wisdom *khyung* (*ye shes khyung chen dgongs pa lung bstan*), chapter 20 relates to appropriate methods for invoking hail (*ser ba*), chapter 27 relates to invoking lightning (*thog*), chapter 67 is concerned with enlightened activities (*'phrin las*), and chapter 138 concerns "words and meanings" (*tshig don*). The actual contents of each of these chapters is extremely terse, sometimes no more than a line or two enumerating short lists of practices such as mantra, samādhi, and so forth.

25. CHAPTERS 12, 20, AND 66 OF *DRAG PO NGAN SNGAGS KYI RTSA BA'I RGYUD*[148]

The first two of these chapters each concern a particular form of subjugation mantra, and are significantly more detailed in their actual content than were the "prophesies" in the previous text. Chapter 12, entitled "Wrathful Subjugation Mantras of the *Khyung* Bird" (*bya khyung gi drag po ngan sngags*), describes the efficacy of specific mantras in invoking the *khyung*, executing nāgas, and so forth. Chapter 20, entitled "Causing Hail to Descend through Wrathful Subjugation Mantras of the *Khyung* Bird" (*bya khyung gi drag po ngan sngags kyis ser ba dbab pa*), describes the way in which one may destroy the hosts of one's enemies, strike the hearts (*gnad la 'bebs*) of the king of interferors (*bgegs pa'i rgyal po*) and one's enemies, afflict nāgas, and so forth by means of specific mantras designed to invoke hail. Chapter 66, "Turning the Wheel of the *Khyung* Bird's Wrathful Mantras" (*bya khyung gi drag sngags kyi 'khor lo bskor ba*) is given as its title only, with no other content.

26. CHAPTERS 12, 20, 27, 67, AND 139 OF THE *DRAG PO NGAN SNGAGS KYI GSHAD RGYUD*[149]

The chapters relating to the khyung in this explanatory tantra (*bshad rgyud*) resemble the material in the previous two texts in both form and content. Chapter 12 is entitled "Subjugation Mantras of the Wisdom *Khyung*" (*ye shes khyung gi ngan sngags*) and briefly describes some of the factors such as subtances (*rdzas*), contemplation (*ting 'dzin*), and one must rely upon to accomplish (*bsgrub*) the aims of the practice. Chapter 20 is entitled "Causing the Hail of the Wisdom *Khyung* to Fall" (*ye she khyung gi ngan sngags)* and similarly describes the factors required for successfful accomplishment of this practice. Chapter 27, titled "Causing the *Khyung's* Lightning to Descend" (*ye shes khyung gi thog dbab pa*), is a similar brief list of required elements for this practice. Chapter 67 is entitled "Turning the Magical Wheel and Making an Iron House with the Wrathful Mantra of the *Khyung* Bird" (*bya khyung 'khrul 'khor bskor ba dang drag sngags lcags khang bca' ba*). Finally, chapter 139 is titled "Explicating the Words and Meanings of the *Khyung* Bird" (*bya khyung gi tshig don dgrol ba*).

27. THE TANTRA OF RITUAL FOR THE LIGHTNING KHYUNG BIRD (*BYA KHYUNG GLOG 'GYU'I LAS KYI RGYUD*)[150]

This 14 chapter work is the longest text in the *rnying ma rgyud 'bum* that has "khyung" in its title. It begins with Vajrapani requesting the Bhagavan to explain whatever rituals will benefit those who experience the suffering of being seized by the malevolent yakṣa-s. The

Bhagavan responds that he will teach 108 *khyung* rituals or methods that will be of benefit to those particularly afflicted (*shin tu nyon mongs pa*) by malevolent hungry ghosts (*yi dags*). This is followed by an elaborate description of the body, speech and mind maṇḍalas (*sku gsung thugs kyi dkyil 'khor*) of the *khyung* in chapter two, an explanation of how to worship (*mchod pa*) these in chapter three, and advice on how to praise in chapter four. Chapter five, then, begins a detailed explanation of the 108 methods (*thabs*) mentioned above. These include methods for curing what are traditionally mentioned as the "main diseases associated with phlegm (*bad kan*), "wind" (*rlung*), bile (*mkhris pa*), and blood (*khrag*). Additionally, methods are included for subjugating yakṣa-s (*gnod sbyin 'dul ba*), enjoining them to perform enlightened actions (*gnod sbying la 'phrin las bcol ba*), as well as instructions for (the practice of) Yamāntaka, rakṣa-s, and so forth. Several methods are specifically concerned with the manner in which one employs the *khyung* to imprison nāgas of the four castes in houses of misery (*mya ngan gyi khang par zhugs*), to snatch them by their hearts or heads, and so forth. Healing techniques mentioned include methods for curing skin afflictions (*sha bkra*), cancer (*'bras*), abscesses (*shu ba*), physical deformities (*lus sgur po*), deaf-mute conditions (*'on dig*), and so forth. A variety of methods are enumerated for the subjugation of spirits and demons of all sorts, such as rites for paralyzing (*rengs pa*), befuddling (*smyo ba*), or striking them dumb (*lkugs su gzhug pa*), turning back their weapons (*mtshon bzlog pa*), curing plague (*rims gso ba*), and so forth. Also included are techniques for causing rain to fall, averting or causing hail, restoring crops, and a host of other arcana.

28. CHAPTER 2 OF THE NāGA-KING TANTRA—DIFFERENTIATING RITUALS (LAS RAB TU 'BYED PA KLU'I RGYAL PO'I RGYUD)[151]

This chapter is entitled "Conquering as the King of the *Khyung* Birds" (*bya khyung gi rgyal por gyur par brtul ba*). In this chapter, the Buddha enters into several samadhis simultaneously, and then emits billions of light rays from various specific parts of his body. Upon seeing these light rays, the nāga-kings fall forward and their heads split open. Realizing that these light rays are the emanation of the Buddha, the nāga-kings desire to flee through emanating as a mass of birds. Then, the Bhagavan transforms the light rays into the king of the *khyungs* through the recitation of a mantra, as well as ancillary mantras invoking superhuman powers such as eradicating all non-virtues (*sdig pa thams cad sel bar byed*), accomplishing one's goals

(*rang gi don grub par byed pa*), and so forth. No sooner are these mantras intoned than the nāga-kings, emanated as a mass of birds, are annihilated.

29. THE THIRD CHAPTER OF KLU'I RGYAL PO MCHOD RTEN GYI RGYUD THUGS YANG DAG PA[152]

This chapter is entitled "Sādhana for the Profound Khyung" (*zab mo khyung gi sgrub thabs).* This chapter is primarily a detailed instruction for meditatively projecting oneself as the *khyung*. Vajrapaṇī requests the Bhagavan for instruction on the second esoteric practice (gsang bsgrub). The Bhagavan then explains that one should imagine oneself in a supreme inconceivable mansion, strewn with scents and flowers, in an outstanding and comfortable place. By reciting the emptiness mantra, one is instructed to meditate on oneself and all concrete things as being empty. From within that state, one is instructed to meditate upon the syllables *keng* and *kar*. The recitation of these syllables causes one to transform into the *khyung* bird with all its characteristics, the sight of which disperses nāgas. Having assumed this form, one then invokes the *khyung* and addresses the nāgas themselves, warning them to listen to one's injunction and not trangress them lest the *khyung* come to eat them.

30. CHAPTER 34 OF THE ESOTERIC INSTRUCTIONS ON SLAYING THE BLACK NāGAS (*KLU NAG PO BSAD PA'I MAN NGAG*)[153]

This extremely short chapter is entitled "Section for the King of the Nāgas [performing] the *Khyung's* Secret Mantra" (*klu'i rgyal po bya khyung ga ru'i gsang sngags kyi skabs*), and is simply a single mantra.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, this single potent metaphor of the "khyung" bird is thus deployed in a variety of ways to achieve a variety of rhetorical aims. Longchenpa was clearly inspired by Śrīsiṃha's text and its organizing metaphor in his formulation of the underlying structure and terminology of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, and we can see just how influential these texts and images truly were by the fact that he refers to Śrīsiṃha's favorite trope of the soaring mythical *khyung* throughout the body of the text. In this sense, Longchenpa's *Treasury of Abiding Reality* and *The Full-Fledged Khyung-chen Bird* are part of a larger family of texts dating in their origins to at least the eighth century. Nevertheless, this vivid symbol of Great Perfection practice does not exist is some pristine vacuum, it is part of a much larger rhetorical matrix that includes the more violent images of a bird of prey devouring snakes and a host of other animals

representing negative influences, and so forth. The "khyung" materials originating from the Mahāyoga tradition are far more focused on the technical details of ritual and meditation than those of the Great Perfection tradition; the Great Perfection materials are concerned, rather, with the evocative imagery of the "khyung" (i.e., the practitioner) "soaring above it all" with an easy, graceful movement.

Thus, the same metaphor takes on different meanings and nuances depending on its context. In addition, there is the interesting phenomenon of these two seemingly distinct semantic ranges this term evokes bleeding into each other to a certain extent, creating a richer, more textured meaning in both. Although this example is an especially prevalent trope in Great Perfection literature, the same principles apply across the board, and it is importaint and interesting for readers to remain alive to the various shades of meaning created by varying contexts.

CONCLUSION

The Treasury of Abiding Reality is a text very much situated at the nexus of various literary and religious trends present in fourteenth century Tibet. As we have seen, Great Perfection rhetoric in general (particularly that derived from the Mind Series and Seminal Heart traditions), and Longchenpa's own utilization of it, are characterized by an emphasis or negative or apophatic language, paradox, inversion/subversion, repetition, analogy, humor, and so forth, an exemplary case of which is the metaphoric matrix of the "khyung" bird. The taxonomies of the rhetorical devices used in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* discussed above are offered as a way to demonstrate the rich and varied literary quality of the text. On a superficial level, the diversity of strategies Longchenpa employs in this text reveals his mastery of the literary arts, and his ability to bring all of this skill to bear on a complex intellectual issue. Thus we see him shift effortlessly between, for example, apophatic and kataphatic rhetoric (depending on the point he is trying to make), integrating humor and other moods as the circumstances dictate. On a deeper level, he deploys these strategies as a means to respond to and critique competing religious ideologies, as well as their philosophical and contemplative significance. The apophatic strategies used by Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Abiding of Reality*, for example, are designed almost entirely to undercut the claims of a variety of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist

philosophical views, and may well reflect the personal experiences that inform his own attitudes and position.

With these possibilities in mind, then, we will now turn in the next chapter to the way that this striking and masterful use of rhetoric in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* may be understood in terms of Longchenpa's life and the historical and socio-political contingencies of the fourteenth century.

---

1 See David Germano, *The Secret Transformation of Buddhist Tantra in Tibet* (Unpublished manuscript, 1997), 422-427.

2 See *Catalogue of Treatises: A Precious Treasure House in Collected Miscellaneous Writings (gsuṅ thor bu) of Rgyal-ba Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa* Vol. 1 (Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrub and Sherab Drimey, 1982), 1.1-13.4. There is another rare edition of this catalogue published in De rge that does not differ significantly from the Bhutanese edition cited here. This catalogue is missing in the edition published from the A 'dzom 'brug pa chos sgas by Sanje Dorje. The catalogue in that edition, *kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po dri med 'od zer gyi gsung thor bu bzhugs byang rin po che'i snye ma*, refers only to the actual works included in the gsung thor bu itself.

3 *klong chen rab 'byams kyis/ gangs ri thod dkar gyi mgul kun tu bzang po'i khang bzangs su sbyar ba rdzogs so//* See *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, 155.7 (Dodrup, 216.2-3).

4 In his recent translation of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, Richard Barron renders the relevant passage from the colophon in a way that supports the former interpretation, while Raymond Robertson's unpublished translation suggests the the latter. See Richard Barron, trans., *The Precious Treasury of the Way of Abiding* (Junction City CA: Padma Publishing, 1998), 268; Raymond Robertson, trans., *The Treasury of Reality Experience* (Unpublished translation, 1995), 253. The term *sbyar ba* is the past tense of the verb *sbyor ba*, and can refer either to composition or addition, mixing, and so forth. The former meaning suggests that the text was actually composed at White Skull Mountain; the latter that it was edited there.

5 The works of Herbert Guenther tend to emphasize Longchenpa's texts as phenomenological explication to the near exclusion of anything else, and always presume that the primary, almost exclusive, meaning to be drawn from these texts is on the phenomenological level. In his *From Reductionism to Creativity*, for example, Professor Guenther argues that we must read every word of Great Perfection texts as an "experiential marker." This sentiment is well expressed in the following comment: "In other words, rDzogs-chen demands that we start

learning to think. While all the grandiose Buddhist systems of thought have, quite literally, come to an end, rDzogs-chen thought remains a challenge, directing our attention to the *thinking* of thinking, not in a vacuum, but in the context of the whole." See Guenther, *From Reductionism to Creativity: rDzogs-chen and the New Sciences of Mind* (Boston: Shambhala, 1989), 248.

6 See David Germano, "The Secret Transformation of Buddhist Tantra in Ancient Tibet" (Unpublished Manuscript, 1997), 261.

7 See, for example, Mipam Gyatso (*mi pham 'jam dbyangs rgya mtsho* 1846-1912), *yid bzhin mdzod kyi sa bcad bsdus don ku ma da'i phreng ba* (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen, n.d.), and *yid bzhin rin po che'i mzod kyi dka' gnad ci rigs gsal bar byed pa* (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, n.d.).

8 Jikmay Lingpa (*'Jigs med gling pa*), *Treasury of Enlightened Qualities (yon tan rin po che'i mdzod)* (Thimpu: Kunzang Topkey, 1975). I (Bhu)-Tib 76-900257. See also Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (*shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan*), The *Precious Treasury of the Intelligent Universe (dbyings rig rin po che'i mzod)* (Dolanji H.P.: Topden Tshering, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1972). I-Tib-905; *The Precious Treasury of Eloquent Sayings (legs bshad rin po che'i mdzod)* (Dolanji, H.P.: Khedrup Gyatso, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1977). I-Tib-1720; *The Precious Treasury of Scripture and Reasoning (lung rigs rin po che'i mdzod)* (Dolanji H.P.: Topden Tshering, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1972). I-Tib-900; *The Treasury of Space (nam mka' mdzod)* (New Tobgyal H.P.: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1973-74). I-Tib-968; and *The Precious Treasury of the Scriptural Categories (sde snod rin po che'i mdzod)* (New Tobgyal, H.P.: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1972-73). I-Tib-935. Large portions of the legs bshad rin po che'i mdzod have been translated and annotated by Samten G. Karmay in *The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

9 This discussion relies on the learned analyses of Professors Herbert Guenther and David Germano. See Herbert Guenther, "Introduction" in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* (Emeryville CA: Dharma Publishing, 1975), xiii-xxv; David Germano, *Secret Transformation*, 416-425.

10 Longchenpa's own catalogue classifies *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* as belonging to the Space Series, and he also identifies *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* as such in his auto-commentary. See Longchenpa, *dri med 'od zer gyi gsung thor bu'i bzhugs byang rin po che'i sne ma*, 11.3-4.

11 Longchenpa does not explicitly identify *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* as a text of the Space Series category. However, its shared scriptural sources and general relationship with *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* in terms of style, content, and time of composition strongly

suggest that it too would fall under the "Space Series" rubric. Furthermore, in the sixth and final chapter of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* Longchenpa's discussion summarizing the various modes of classifying Great Perection systems spends a disproportionate amount of time on the topic of the "Nine Spaces" (*klong dgu*) in its treatment of the Space Series. This seemingly incongruous digression at the end of the text might strongly suggests that Longchenpa wished to establish the connection between *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* and the Space Series.

12 The following relies primarily on discussions found in Guru Tashi's (*gu ru bkra shis*) *Religious History (chos 'byung)* and Dudjom Rinpoche's (*bdud 'joms rin po che*) *Fundamentals of the rNying-ma School (bstan pa'i rnam bzhag)*. See Guru Tashi, *gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (A-mdọ: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe krun khang, 1990), 69-89; bDud-'joms Rin-po-che, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein, trans., (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 151-346.

13 Mention D. Phillip Stanley and David Germano's research into this field.

14 See Guru Tashi, *gu bkra'i chos 'byung*, p. 83. (*sna tshogs sems kyi sde ste/ 'di dag ni sems rang byung gi ye shes las/ gzhan du gyur pa 'gog pa tsam la dgongs pa'o*).

15 See Samten Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 176.

16 See David Germano, *Mysticism and Rhetoric in the Great Perfection* (Unpublished manuscript, 1996), p. 113.

17 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 36.7-37.1.

18 Khenpo Tsewant Gyatso gives basically the same interpretation: "It is like the rays of the sun itself being able to perform two activities at the same time, right? In the same manner, the power of awareness is able to manifest as both the impure phenomena of sa?sāra and the pure phenomena of nirvāṇa."

19 See *rig pa khu byug gi rgyud* in the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum)* Vol. 1 (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 499.6-524.6.

20 See Nub Sangyay Yeshay, *bsam gtan mig sgron* (Leh, Ladakh: S.W. Tashigangpa, 1974), and Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo, *theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa* in *Commentaries on the Guhyagarbha Tantra and other Rare Nyingma Texts from the Library of Dudjom Rinpoche, Vol. 1* (New Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1974).

21 See Longchenpa, *tshig don rin po che'i mdzod* (Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen and Khentse Labrang, 1983).

[22] In 48.2 read *med pas **bslus*** for *med pas **blus*** according to root text [5.4].

[23] The word *don* here, often translated as "meaning" also has the meaning of "referent" or "metaphysical certainty."

[24] Root text [5.4] reads *chos **kyi** bdag.*

[25] Logchenpa, Treasury of Abiding Reality, 48

[26] See David Germano, Mysticism and Rhetoric in the Great Perfection (rdzogs chen) (Unpublished Manuscript: 1996), 36.

[27] Tulku Thondup, "Introduction," in *The Precious Treasury of the Way of Abiding*, Richard Barron, trans. (Junction City CA: Padma Publishing, 1998), p. xix.

[28] See Herbert Guenther, *The Dynamics of Being: rDzogs-chen Process Thinking* (Alberta: Society for Tbetan Studies, 1983), 19.

[29] Rebecca French states that the "moral foundation of the secular legal system" in Tibet was the Ten Non-virtuous Acts and the Sixteen Moral Principles of the First King. See, for example, Rebecca French, *The Golden Yoke* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[30] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel gnas lugs rin po che'i mdzod ces bya ba'i 'grel ba ldeb* (Delhi: Sherab Gyaltsen, 1983), 48.1-2. In this passage Longchenpa also cites /risi?ha's *Khyung chen mkha' lding.*

[31] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 69.1-2.

[32] George A. Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[33] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 29.2-3.

[34] *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)*, p. 107. (gting kyes edition)?

[35] See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry, 2nd Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[36] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 23.

[37] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 27.2-27.3.

[38] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 132.5.

[39] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 132.5-132.7.

[40] In *gnas lugs* 133.3, I am reading *bstan cing thos **pas*** for *bstan cing thos **pa*** according to the same passage cited earlier.

[41] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 133.2-133.4.

[42] mKhan-po Tshe-dbang comments on the "three existences" (*srid pa gsum*): (Greg: *"srid pa gsum dang khams gsum gcig pa red pas?"*) mKhan-po: *"spyir btang gcig pa red. steng lha'i srid pa;*

bar mi'i srid pa; 'og klu'i srid pa—de 'dra'i nang bzhin. de nas, yang nang nas, 'dod khams, gzugs khams, gzugs med khams, khams gsum red ba? zhe drag khyad par mi 'dug."

43 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 37.4-37.5.

44 Khenpo Tswewang Gyatso interprets the "abyss of pleasure and pain" (*bde sdug gi g.yang sa*) as hope and fear (*re ba dang dogs pa*), or as he translates them, optimism and pessimism about falling into sa?sāra or attaining nirvāṇa.

45 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 37.5-37.7.

46 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 35.5-35.7

47 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 111.5-111.6.

48 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 68.5-68.7

49 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 68.7-69.1.

50 See articles by David Jackson and Roger Jackson in JIABS.

51 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 24.4-25.1.

52 Play *(rol pa)*, dynamism *(rtsal ba)*, and ornament *(rgyan)* are three different (i.e., *not* synonyms) dimensions of the dynamism of awareness (*rig pa*). Longchenpa talks about these in great detail in *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Profound (zab mo yang thig)*. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 11, 1995) explains that in general in the Great Perfect system according to the Mind Series tradition, all phenomena of sa?sāra and nirvā°a are the play of self-emergent primordial wisdom. According to the Space Series, all phenomena are the dynamism of primordial wisdom; and according to the Esoter Precept Series, all phenomena are the ornamentation of primordial wisdom. >From this comes the appearance of subject-object duality.

53 This progressive discussion of the commitments seems to correspond to the standard typology: (1) View (*lta ba*); (2) meditation (*sgoms pa*); (3) conduct (*spyod pa*); and (4) fruit (*'bras bu*).

54 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 32.1-32.4.

55 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 32.4.

56 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 118.1-118.3.

57 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 144.6-145.1.

58 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 139.2-139.3.

59 Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 61.6-61.7.

60 See Arthur Quinn, *Figures of Speech: 60 Ways to Turn a Phrase* (Davis: Hermagoras Press, 1993), pp. 67-68, 101.

[61] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 73.2-73.3.

[62] Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 12.

[63] Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages,* p. 217.

[64] Robert Gimello, "Apophatic and Kataphatic Discourse in Mahayana: A Chinese View," in *Philosophy East and West 26:2* (April, 1976): 131 (117-135).

[65] Center and horizon of the visual fields. The absence of a horizon and center has an awareness.

[66] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 47.3-47.4.

[67] See Dudjom Rinpoche, *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Vol. 2,* p.164.

[68] See Jikmay Tenpay Nyima (*'jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma*), *The Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of Rdo-grub-chen 'Jigs-med-bstan-pa'i-nyi-ma* (Gangtok, 1974), pp.145.4-146.2. Thanks to Nathaniel Garson for this reference.

[69] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 60.5.

[70] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 60.5.

[71] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 60.6-60.7. See *kun byed* 32.2-32.4.

[72] The "extreme" philosophical positions here usually refer to four assertions concerning whether a particular thing either exists (*yod*), does not exist (*med*), both (*yin*), or neither (*min*). This formulation is strongly reminiscent of the famous "tetralemma" associated with Nagarjuna and the Madhyamika School of Buddhism, which refutes the four possibilities that a cause and its effect are the same, different, both, or neither. In the Great Perfection awareness and the expanse of reality can never adequately be characterized in terms of existence, non-existence, both, or neither, and to the extent that all ordinary phenomena participate in, are an expression of, this larger reality they cannot be characterized in this way either.

[73] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 77.5-77.6.

[74] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 79.4.

[75] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 66.3-66.5.

[76] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 105.4-105.5.

[77] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 24.4-25.1.

[78] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 148.7-149.1.

[79] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 151.3.

[80] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel, 151.3-151.7.*

[81] See Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), pp. 178, 643.

[82] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 35.4-35.5.

[83] See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 178-184.

[84] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 36.2-36.3.

[85] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 153.7-154.6.

[86] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 68.3-68.4.

[87] In *gnas lugs mdzod* 50.3 read *bzhin du ma yin gyis* for *bzhin du ma yin gyi* according to *kun byed* 60.3.

[88] *gnas lugs* 50.4 omits *rang sems de bzhin nyid la ma rtog byed* ("Do not conceptualize the Suchness of your own mind") which is found in *kun byed* 60.4.

[89] This is a phenomenological kind of thing—do not think that what is going on here is a logical type debate where the mind discerns defining characteristics, but instead it is this lighting up, an experiential thing. This relates to the earlier quote above that suggests that correct understanding will not accomplish anything so long as one's body and speech are tied up in knots.

[90] Or: "Nothing is accomplished through attaining Buddhahood"

[91] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 50.3-50.5. See also *kun byed* 60.3-60.7.

[92] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 150.1.

[93] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 150.2-150.4.

[94] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 29.1.

[95] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 30.2-30.3.

[96] See *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1984), p. 463.

[97] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 27.7-28.1.

[98] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 47.7-48.1.

[99] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 48.1-48.2. See also *khyung chen*, 386.6-387.1, which reads: "*sgrin po'i sems la gzeg skur khams gsum las mi 'da'/ ma bcos glen snang su la lhod yod pa/ 'di ni 'khor 'das gnyis la mi gnas so/*".

[100] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 83.2.

[101] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 83.5-83.6.

[102] See *Sata-Pitaka series, Indo-Asian Literatures, vol. 74*, (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968), p. 189.

[103] See Douglas Fox, trans., *The Heart of Buddhist Wisdom: A Translation of the Heart Sutra With Historical Introduction and Commentary* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), p. 78-79.

[104] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 132.5-132.7.

[105] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 133.2-133.4.

[106] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 147.3-147.4.

[107] Another reading: "Devoid of [distorted] conceptuality that grasps at light and darkness, it automatically appears with an easy, gentle force."

[108] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel,* 25.4-26.2. mKhan-po Tshe-dbang rGya-mtsho (May 8, 1995) suggests that this final line may be interpreted to mean that "There is no place (*gnas*) to abide like that within the dimension (*don*) of the Great Perfection." (*rdzogs chen don la de bzhin gnas med pa'o*).

[109] In a Buddhist context, it is quite shocking to say that all your activities have no ethical force to them. This flies in the face of normative Buddhist interpretations of karma. and so forth. This is the joke.

[110] The joke here is that the singularity overcomes the duality.

[111] This entire passage appears to resist the laws and institutions of normative Buddhism (and its attendant social agendas) with its emphasis on jokes, games, aesthetics—these resist legal codes. There is a certain subversive social agenda to this passage as well

[112] Appears to be a polemical attack on proto-Geluk view of emptiness. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso explains the notion of an emptiness which is a non-emptiness in the following way: *"mi stong pa'i stong pa stong pa rang gi ngo bo nyid mi stong pa red. stong pa'i ngo bo nyid mi stong pa red. stong pa ngo bo nyid mi stong pa'i stong pa de yin na dper na mi stong pa'i stong pa dngos can zer, dngos po can, dngos po can la brten nas kho rang ltos dang zer gyi 'dug. mi stong pa 'di dngos po can red. mi stong pa dngos po can 'di med pa 'di'i stong pa. bdag med pa 'di spyir btang bdag med pa stong pa can zer gyi red. bdag tu 'dzin pa yang dngos po'i gnas lugs dbang du byas na mi 'dug; bdag tu 'dzin pa mi 'dug. 'di bdag tu 'dzin pa'i theg pa 'di ga re zer na, mi stong pa'i stong pa red."*

[113] Alternative readings: One attains the unborn state through the produced—i.e., it is only by dealing with the manifold displays of awareness that one attains to the absolute. This is consonant with the Great Perfection valorization of phenomena and ordinary activities. Alternate reading: One attains the unborn state through being born. This is an elaboration or refinement of the above interpretation. Only through the ugly messy sticky process of birth can one hope to go beyond it.

---

[114] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 24.4-24.5.

[115] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 41.4-41.6.

[116] Cited in Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 31.2-31.4.

[117] Śrī Siṃha, *The Sky-Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen mkha' lding)* in *Snying thig ya bzhi of Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 8 (bi ma snying thig part 2)*, (New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1971): 376-387.

[118] See *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1983), p. 266. (*sngar gyi bshad srol bya chen zhig khyung mkha' lding snyi la 'dzin thabs med/*)

[119] See Longchenpa, *khyung chen gshog rdzogs*, in *snying thig ya bzhi/zab mo yang thig*, Vol. 10 (Delhi: Sherab Gyaltsen Lama, 1975). This work has recently been translated and annotated by Professor Herbert Guenther in *The Full-Fledged* Khyung-chen *Bird: An Essay in Freedom as the Dynamics of Being* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1996). See also Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol (*zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol*), *'Od gsal Rdzogs pa chen po'i khregs chod lta ba'i glu dbyan̄s sa lam ma lus myur du bgrod pa'i rtsal ldan mkha' ldin̄ gsog rlabs* (Sonada, Darjeeling: Rangrig and Konchhog Lhadrepa, 1985). This work has been studied by Franz-Karl Ehrhard in *Flügelschläge des Garuda: literar- und ideengeschichtliche Bemerkungen zu einer Liedersammlung des Rdzogs-chen* (Stuttgart : F. Steiner Verlag, 1990).

[120] See Franz-Karl Ehrhard, "Recently Discovered Manuscripts of the rNying ma rGyud 'bum from Nepal," in Ernst Steinkellner, ed., *Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), 253-267.

[121] Longchenpa, *Treasury of Words and Meanings (tshig don rin po che'i mdzod)* (Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen and Khentse Labrang, 1983), 364.3-4. The verses he cites following this passage are found in Śrī Siṃha, *Great Khyung*, 382.3-383.1, 384.6-385.2, 388.4-387.1. For an English translation of these passages, see David Germano, trans., *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* (Unpublished translation, 1994), 229-230.

[122] Longchenpa, *khyung chen gshogs rdzogs*, in *snying thig ya bzhi/zab mo yang thig* Vol. 10 (New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1971). Herbert Guenther has recently published a translation of this work. See Herbert Guenther, ed. and trans., *The Full-Fledged Khyung-chen Bird* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies of *ICABS*, 1996).

[123] See *kun byed rgyal po*, Tb. 1, pp. 87.2-91.7. This chapter is clearly an appropriation of the *Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen lding ba)* found in other editions of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. See *khyung chen lding ba*, Tk 1, 419.4-423.3, Vg 308.1-313. Large portions of this

chapter are also found in the second chapter of *byang chub kyi sems khyung chen gyi rgyud* discussed immediately below.

[124] See *la zlo gsang ba'i 'khor lo* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 1, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 282.3-284.3.

[125] See *byang chub kyi sems khyung chen gyi rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTsham brag Edition, Vol. 1, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 537-560.

[126] See *rdzogs pa chen po sku gsum ye shes lnga'i don bshad pa nyi zla kha sbyor seng ge sgra yi dgongs pa bshad pa'i rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 5, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan), pp. 528.7-529.7. The image of the *khyung* is pervasive throughout various genres of Tibetan religious literature from different sectarian traditions as a metaphor "sudden" enlightenment. For an interesting discussion on this and other animal metaphors, see David Jackson, "Birds in the Egg and Newborn Lion Cubs: Metaphors for the Potentialities and Limitations of "All-at-once" Enlightenment," in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies* Vol. 1 (Narita: Naritan Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1992): pp. 95-120.

[127] See *rdo rje gsang ba chen po'i sku rin po che dbyig gi sgron ma shes rab chen po'i mdo* in The Collected Tantras of the Ancients, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 7, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 875.7-876.7.

[128] *See lta ba khyung chen lding ba'i rgyud*, Tb.8, pp. 19.4-22.7.

[129] See *rig pa rang shar*, Kaneko #153, p. 784. Thanks to David Germano for this reference.

[130] See *'phags pa gsang sngags chen po bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i mdo*, Tb.8, pp. 618.2-621.1.

[131] See *dpal zla gsang nag po'i rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 26 (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 178.3-180.1.

[132] See *dpal padma dbang chen dregs pa zil gnon gyi rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 31, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 255.5-257.4.

[133] See *khro bo rta mchog rol pa* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 32, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 446.6-447.7.

[134] See *khro bo rta mchog rol pa* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 32, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 646.6-648.1.

[135] See *rdo rje khyung gi snying po srog gi rtsa ba'i rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 43, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 27.1-30.6.

[136] See *rdo rje khyung nag gsang ba rin po che'i rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 43, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 243.6-249.3.

---

137 See *rdo rje gtum po gsang ba rin po che khyung nag tu sprul pa'i rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 43, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 249.3-256.3.

138 See *rdo rje khyung nag gi rgyud yang snying rtsa ba'i man ngag* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 43, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 256.4- 260.2.

139 See *gsang ba don 'dus phyag na rdo rje khyung dang bcas pa'i rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 43, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 260.2-268.3.

140 See *rdo rje khyung nag gi rgyud rin po che'i sprul pa* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 43, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 268.3-271.5.

141 See *rdo rje bya khyung gsang ba rin po che 'khros pa sprul pa'i rgyud* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 43, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 271.5-277.3.

142 See *gtum po chen po ma rungs pa rdo rje khyung dang bcas pa don 'dus pa gsang ba'i rgyud chen po'i don btus pa* in *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, mTshams brag Edition, Vol. 43, (Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982), pp. 277.3-281.3.

143 See *rdo rje gtsug lag 'khor lo gsum pa'i rgyud chen po*, Tb 44, pp. 130.4-131.4.

144 See *'phags pa rdo rje gtsug lag gi 'khor lo'i rgyud chen po*, Tb 44, pp. 204.3-209.7.

145 See *rdo rje khyung gtsug lag 'khor lo'i rgyud*, Tb 44, pp. 254.4-258.2.

146 See *rdo rje gtsug lag drag po ngan sngags me long rnam par bkod pa 'khor lo gzer gyi rgyud*, Tb 44, pp. 296.7-297.4.

147 See *drag po brtsegs pa dgongs pa lung bstan pa'i rgyud*, Tb. 44, pp. 352.3-352.5, 355.4-355.6, 357.5-357.7, 371.1-371.2, 396.4-396.5.

148 See *drag po ngan sngags kyi rtsa ba'i rgyu*, Tb. 44, pp. 438.6-439.2, 445.2-446.1, 502.1.

149 See *drag po ngan sngags kyi gshad rgyud*, Tb 44, pp. 530.3-530.6, 533.5-533.6, 535.2-535.4, 547.3-547.5, 574.1-574.3.

150 See *bya khyung glog 'gyu'i las kyi rgyud*, Tb 45, pp. 198.7-268.3.

151 See *las rab tu 'byed pa klu'i rgyal po'i rgyud*, Tb 45, pp. 271.4-273.2.

152 See *klu'i rgyal po mchod rten gyi rgyud thugs yang dag pa*, Tb 45, pp. 479.2-482.2.

153 See *klu nag po bsad pa'i man ngag*, Tb 45, pp. 930.7- 931.1.

CHAPTER SIX: INTERIOR READING OF THE GNAS LUGS MDZOD

We have now before us some of the facets and building blocks of a dense, rich, and complex work of religious literature, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. We started with the assumption of the text's unproblematic unity, namely its unambiguous statement of a univocal philosophical stance. Now, however, having analyzed its form and content carefully, that unity may now be cast into doubt through the introduction of a variety of perspectives and factors not often considered in the analysis of texts of this type. We have seen how the centuries leading up to the fourteenth century in Tibet are characterized by an almost staggering level of discursive fragmentation and diversity in the social, political, and religious domains. Longchenpa expresses many of these discursive streams in one form or another in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, and this fact undermines the initial inuitive sense of its unproblematic unity. The present chapter asks the question whether it is possible to retrieve a new, more nuanced sense of unity.

In the preceding chapters we examined some of the forces and events that shaped the world in which *The Treasury of Abiding* Reality was composed. Specifically we focused on the historical, biographical, and literary factors contributing to its formation. We examined (briefly) the specifics of its historical circumstances, the political, social, and intellectual ferment of the times. This included the rise of a newly reorganized Tibetan state and the strengthening of religious institutions, as well as an abundance of military and ideological conflict. The period is characterized by a dramatic shift of political power from regional aristocratic families to large scale sectarian religious institutions, some of which were clan-based. This shift is mirrored to a large extent by a similar movement away from familial religious lineages towards religious institutions. Furthermore, these trends also had a significant impact on the status of the Ancient School, which was forced to address the challenges of encroaching modernity and devise ways in which to re-position itself vis-à-vis these challenges. In this regard it is important to bear in mind that Longchenpa himself, the author of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, was perhaps the most important figure involved with articulating the Ancient School's literary and doxographical responses to these concerns. It is important to bear in mind that Longchenpa's intellectual project was to show how Nyingma-specific tantric systems related to emerging normative doctrinal systems.

We have also glanced at the details of Longchenpa's life and times. Whereas the broad contours of his biographies resemble those of almost any other major Tibetan religious figure, when one looks more closely the peculiarities of Longchenpa's personality and life become evident. In our analysis we focused in particular on his venerable and prestigious family and spiritual lineages, and on his close identification with the physical and spiritual "center" of Tibet, particularly Samye Monastery. We examined his religious "education" taken in the term's broadest sense. This comprised not only the usual topics of what might be called a Tibetan "liberal arts" education (including medicine, astrology, ritual, poetics, philosophy, and so forth), but also deeply affecting experiences while traveling and meditating with his principal teacher Kumārādza. Further, during the course of his education and other encounters with prominent persons and trends, we discern in Longchenpa a strong sense of moral indignation and being persecuted. Given the fact that he was indeed frequently a target of hostility and attack among rivals, this perception was justified. It is this sense of alienation from the prevailing views and conduct of the day that provides the backdrop for Longchenpa's conflicted, but pivotal, relationship with Jangchup Gyaltsen. The latter's biography as well, filled as it is with legal and military struggles, hints at his underlying legalistic agenda and suggests a possible focus for Longchenpa's frustration and resentment.

Finally, we explored a representative sampling of the rhetorical devices employed in Great Perfection literature of the Mind Series (*sems sde*) generally, and in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in particular. These devices are largely apophatic in character and often rhetorically undermine such conventional or normative beliefs and practices as piety, ethical conduct, and so forth, although it is important to point out the text's distinctive conjunction of highly apophatic *and* kataphatic discourses. This apophatic rhetoric, with its subtle antinomian undertones, is well suited to the task of conveying the potentially subversive message of marginal individuals or groups because it makes a claim to authority that is outside the domain of normal institutional power structures. In this way, various marginal individuals and groups can rhetorically differentiate themselves form more mainstream movements, as well as assert their authority based on different criteria. In fact, it may be that literary antecedents to the apophatic discourse of the Great Perfection such as Indian Perfection of Wisdom (skt. *prajñāparamitā*, tib. *phar phyin*) (ca. 1st century CE), Middle Way Philosophical texts (ca. 2nd century CE), as well as certain Tantric tropes from later centuries, served similar purposes in

their own respective historical contexts.[1] Similarly, some of the examples of Mind Series texts utilized by Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* may well have been devised by their authors between tenth and eleventh centuries as responses to the monastic forms of Buddhism being touted by Yeshe Ö and Jangchup Ö in western Tibet at that time.

In this chapter, then, I will attempt to assemble the puzzle pieces of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. Such pieces include its content, the times in which it was composed, its stylistics, and the experiences and idiosyncrasies of its author. However, rather than to suggest that the text is incoherent or that it collapses under the sheer weight of its complexity, I will instead attempt to demonstrate that it is a fascinating mosaic that reflects a plethora of influences. Here I shall argue that, far from being a distraction from the ostensible focus of this dense polyphonic work, these complexities rather *enrich* the text and are in any case part and parcel of the text's gestalt.

TREASURY OF ABIDING REALITY'S AUDIENCE(S)

On a general level, the *Treasury of Abiding Reality* represents Longchenpa's sincere attempt to somehow account for and integrate the wildly disparate influences of the immediately preceding centuries. These influences included the rise of the Modern Schools, the revival of monasticism, the flourishing of the Great Perfection genres of Mind Series and Seminal Heart, the institutionalization of esoteric tantric practices and precepts, and so forth. In thinking about the ways in which Longchenpa sought to achieve this synthesis in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, we are soon presented with the crucial question: For whom was Longchenpa writing this work? Of course, it is likely that it was intended for a variety of audiences, each of which would glean different significance from it depending on their background and predispositions. Be that as it may, it is still worthwhile spending a moment trying to imagine the audience(s) for whom the work was composed.

On the one hand, a dense and often technical text of this type was almost certainly composed for internal intellectual, literary, and contemplative comsumption. That is to say, it was written for close students and followers either of Longchenpa himself, or of the Great Perfection traditions in general. We can infer this merely from the sources cited in the work, all but two or three of which are tantras recognized solely by followers of the Nyingma School. More significantly, *The All-Creating King*, the single most cited work in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, was criticized as early as 1032 as apocryphal and inauthentic by Zhiwa Ö (*zhi ba 'od*, ca.

eleventh century).[2] Moreover, as we have seen, Longchenpa explicitly endorses the position of the largely vilified figure of Ha-shang Mahayana in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality,* which indicates yet again that he was less than interested in winning support in mainstream religious circles of the day than he was in rallying his own followers.[3]

Nonetheless, as David Germano points out, the Mind Series emphasis on aphorism and other highly literary modes of language avoids the theoretical and contemplative details of of the seminal Heart movement, and as such might have provided a way to disseminate Great Perfection intellectual concepts in a relatively trans-sectarian fashion.[4] As Germano argues, this drive to integrate the Great Perfection with the increasingly normative tantric movements in Tibet characterizes several of his texts, and *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is not unique in that sense. However, the same historical circumstances certainly informed its composition as much or more than any number of other texts, and this feature should not be overlooked in our analysis.

The question of who the audience for this text was meant to be is an interesting and important one. When viewed from the rhetorical point of view, the text might well be used to "persuade" members of an already existing community, to create a sense of cohesion or identity within the fold. Great Perfection rhetoric is singular and dramatic, and it has been my observation that it tends to polarize people or groups; either they embrace its claims or they reject them, but seldom do they have a neutral response. Also, it is not absolutely necessary to have complete comprehension of the nuanced and subtle Great Perfection doctrines for its rhetoric to be effective. While living in Ngagyur Nyingma Institute in Bylakuppe India, site of the largest Nyingma monastic college outside Tibet, I observed that all the students were very proud of their identity as followers of Great Perfection, regardless of their actual exposure to its practice or teaching. Its difference vis-à-vis other traditions of Buddhism allowed the students to define themselves in relation to that which they were not. Moreover, the lightness and humor of much of the language creates an atmosphere of a large inside joke—those who "get it" will likely feel themselves closer to enlightenment in some sense, while those who don't are either foolish or worthy of pity. Implicit in this arrangement is the understanding that "enlightenment" must be fun and enjoyable.

It is doubtful that Great Perfection rhetoric, as it is found in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality,* would be particularly persuasive to either the average follower or specialist of other Tibetan Buddhist traditions, and in fact in many cases might be considered heretical. However, it is also

plausible that texts such as these *were* in fact read outside the tradition for precisely those reasons—to know what the competition was, so to speak. Moreover, even if specialists or rank-and-file members of the competing schools did not completely agree with the views expressed in such texts, they might find them somewhat appealing or persuasive from several different points of view. First, even if they reject his sources, scholars are bound to have recognized Longchenpa's erudition and literary skill. For the literati, these factors have an almost intrinsic persuasive value. Second, the language of Mind Series rhetoric in particular (which is the principle form of rhetoric emplyed by Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*) makes a strong appeal to an individual's *experience*. Hence, it rhetorically operates on a different level from logic, argument, structure and so on. The language at times nearly seems to have the power to induce the experience it describes, and this can have a powerful effect on the reader. Moreover, through negative and symbolic language, it specifically addresses the questions of contemplative and transformed experience, without a lot of the customary technical jargon that often accompanies texts concerned with tantric praxis. This quality makes it immediately accessible in a way that meditation manuals often are not. Finally, texts such as *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* engage and challenge the beliefs held by most other schools. If nothing else, such texts force adherents of different schools understand their own positions better, and occasionally may call those beliefs up short. Texts of this sort are sometimes called "fruit-texts" as a compromise. That is, they claim to describe a Buddha's experience from within, without necessarily undermining the claims of texts and traditions more focused on the procedures associated with the practices on the path. This is a very powerful rhetorical strategy in a culture where Buddhas are the ultimate authority and source of power.

HISTORICAL READINGS

EARLY BACKGROUND

We have already examined briefly the historical context for the majority of Great Perfection texts Longchenpa cites in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*. It is during this period between the 9th-11th centuries that the Tibetan nation dissolves and the influential "reform" movements associated with Yeshe Ö, Jangchup Ö, Rinchen Zangpo, Atiśa, and others, gain momentum. Generally speaking, these movements often emphasize virtues such as orderly progression

through spiritual hierarchies, strict observance of conservative, usually monastic, ethical guidelines, and so forth. These movements are inclined to contain and constrain the potentially dangerous or heretical views and practices commonly associated with tantra, even as tantra emerges as the dominant tradition.

The text that best exemplifies these characteristics is probably *The Lamp for the Path (bodhipathapradīpa, byang chub lam gyi sgron ma)* by Atiśa (ca. 11th century).[5] This poem and its auto-commentary set the standard for what was to become the extremely influential "gradual path" (*lam rim*) literature in Tibet, and more or less set the ideological tone for the Buddhist reform movements of the 10th-11th centuries, originating in western Tibet. Although this text, and others like it, did not explicitly forbid the esoteric practices associated with tantra, it sought to restrict access to such practices strictly to the spiritual elite, who had already successfully negotiated the lower echelons of the path structure. This successful negotiation entailed the observation of graduated levels of behavioral and ethical codes that tended to prioritize ideals connected with a monastic lifestyle such as celibacy, study, regimented ethical conduct, and so forth.[6] Atiśa goes on to assert that only those who adhere to the "pure life" (*tshangs spyod*), i.e., pure monastic conduct, are suitable candidates for Great Vehicle instruction, itself an absolute prerequisite for the practice of tantra. In discussing the superiority of the monastic lifestyle and its centrality to the "higher" practices, he states:

> And it is the Blessed One himself who held that the pure vow of the Monk is "the perfect foundation for the Great Vehicle, and superior by far."[7]

And elsewhere, in his root stanzas, Atiśa is even emphatic:

> The Tathāgata has said that of
> The seven ranks of Pratimokśa,
> The glorious Pure Life is the highest;
> By which he meant the vows of a Monk.[8]

The gist of these and other passages from this extremely influential work is twofold. First, it reinforces the hierarchical structure of the spiritual paths, implying that the ultimate aim of enlightenment can only be attained gradually, and through observing strict rules of order. Second, it explicitly endorses the monastic ideal as a model for spiritual progression.

Rhetorically, and in many cases practically, neither of these positions found much support in the pre-existing Tibetan Buddhist communities of the day, which were later to become known as the Ancient School. The fall of the Dynastic period in the ninth century gave rise to what Turrell Wylie and others have referred to as the "local hegemonic period," which lasted all the way until the fourteenth century.[9] As Samuel points out, at the beginning of this period there was no appreciable monastic tradition in Tibet at all. Rather, the predominant form of Buddhism was tantric in character and transmitted principally through hereditary lineages. Samuel expresses it this way:

> The form of Buddhism that survived and to some extent flourished was that closest to the 'shamanic' folk religion of Tibet. It was a form of Tantric Buddhism, continued by hereditary lineages of lay Tantric practitioners who provided ritual services to the surrounding population.[10]

Thus, prior to the advent of the reform movements initiated in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, most Tibetan Buddhist practitioners were concerned primarily with ritual matters and were not monastic or scholastic by inclination. Similarly, whereas there may well have been strong ethical concerns or hierarchical attitudes (particularly vis-à-vis the guru-disciple relationship) in these traditions, such were never the predominant issues. Individuals such as priests were embedded in village life in the sense that they could be religious specialists by day, fathers and husbands by night, and so forth—clans were the dominant social structure, not some separate religious institution.

As the so-called "dark period" comes to a close in the late tenth century, and the initial rise of the modern (*gsar ma*) traditions, the groups adhering to the earlier traditions tended to break down along two distinct lines of theory and practice: Mahāyoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*) and Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*). The former constitutes "a classic tantric system with the full spectrum of beliefs and practices characterizing late Indian Buddhist tantric movements," while the latter "defined itself by the rhetorical rejection of such normative categories constituting tantric as well as non-tantric Buddhism."[11]

We have seen how the kings of Purang were particularly opposed to the practices associated with Mahāyoga, but there is evidence that they objected to the Great Perfection tradition as well. For example, although Yeshe Ö principally criticizes practices associated with Mahāyoga,

he also singles out the Great Perfection tradition in his famous screed attacking corrupt Buddhist customs in Tibet:

> False doctrine called rDzogs chen is flourishing in Tibet.
> The views of this doctrine are mistaken.[12]

At any rate, Atiśa was probably invited to Tibet as part of a larger agenda to create a fully rationalized non-tantric form of Buddhism. Atiśa's own attitude towards Buddhism and tantra, however, seems to have been that tantric practice *is* permissible, but only after thorough preliminary training. At any rate, he never explicitly denied the validity of the tantric path, and there are least suggestions that Atiśa was more sympathetic to the pursuit of tantric practice than his hosts might have been.[13] Needless to say, Atiśa advocated a more sanitized form of tantra than the practices of "union" (*sbyor ba*) and "liberation" (*sgrol ba*) so abhorred by the kings of Western Tibet, as discussed in Chapter Three. Nevertheless, the rhetoric and literature of the Highest Yoga Tantra (skt. *anuttarayogatantra*, tib. *bla med rgyud*) and Mahāyoga are remarkably similar and probably arose from similar sources. The impact of Mahāyoga's powerful subversive antinomian rhetoric is the striking way it breaks with the codes and norms of non-tantric Buddhism, whereas the impact of Atiśa's rhetorical synthesis of sutra and tantra is the way in which it integrates the concerns of these two disparate streams into a systematic, gradual progression through hierarchies of spiritual levels and paths. This concern with gradualism is reflected in the follwoing quotation from Atiśa's *Gathering the Essence (snying po bsdu ba)*:

> Through joining your increasing meditative equipoise with
> The Six Perfections, and so forth,
> You gradually traverse the Five Paths and
> Eliminate the two types of obscuration.
> Through thoroughly completing the Two Accumulations (of merit and wisdom),
> You will achieve the fruit of the Three Spiritual Bodies.[14]

Though this citation does not specifically address the issues of tantra, it amply attests to the gradualist orientation of the religious discourse prevalent at the time. As one's meditation improves and deepens (implicitly over time), the spiritual person *gradually (rim gyis)* progresses

through a *series* of five paths, and finally achieves the reward for this diligent effort, the fruit of Buddhahood.

The Great Perfection literature of this period, known as the "Mind Series" (*sems sde*), itself stemmed from Buddhist tantra as represented by the Mahāyoga texts.[15] As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the Mind Series movement is characterized by rhetorical denials of the validity of standard tantric categories and practices, particularly those known as the "ten principles" (*dngos po bcu*). David Germano suggests that such denials were attempts on the part of the texts (and their authors) to differentiate themselves from tantra.[16] Examples of this rhetoric are drawn from various texts associated with the Mind Series. The most prominent of these are from *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*, where the "ten principles" (*dngos po bcu*) of tantra are rhetorically negated using the parallel categories of the "ten natures" (*rang bzhin bcu*). These ten natures constitute a radical rejection of the ten principles that define normative Buddhist praxis in general, and Mahāyoga praxis in particular.[17] The following passage from *The All-Creating King* is fairly typical:

> The enlightening mind is like the sky, [and]
> Within the reality which is the space-like mind-as-such
> There is no cultivating the view, pledges do not need to be guarded,
> There is no exertion in spiritual activities, primordial wisdom lacks any obstructions,
> There is no training in the spiritual levels, and likewise there is no path on which to progress,
> There are no subtle doctrines/phenomena, no dual [phenomena], and no dependent [phenomena],
> There is no delineation of definitive scriptures pertaining to something other than mind [itself], and
> Since [mind-as-such] transcends exaggeration and deprecation, there is no 'conviction' (*la bzlar med*) with respect to esoteric instructions (*man ngag*).
> This is the Great Perfection view of the enlightening mind.[18]

The passage demonstrates some of the classical literary strategies deployed in Mind Series literature to undermine claims of what was, in many ways, the most prestigious and influential

discourse of its time. The purport is that within the pristine, a-temporal (and largely rhetorical) space of the "enlightening mind" (skt. *bodhicitta*, tib. *byang chub kyi sems*), standard Buddhist categories such as the correct philosophical "view" (*lta ba*), enlightened activities (*phrin las*), spiritual levels and paths (*sa lam*), tantric "pledges" (*dam tshig*), and so forth, *do not exist*.

The technical vocabulary being thrown into question here echoes the language and presuppositions being propounded by Atiśa and others during the same period, as illustrated in the previous passage. In contrast with the gradual presentation's metaphors of movement, progression, skill, effort, achievement and so on, in the Great Perfection there is *no* meditative cultivation of a "view"; there is *no* exertion in spiritual activities; there is *no* obscuration of primordial wisdom; there is *no* path to traverse; there is *no* result to achieve.

The apophatic Mind Series rhetoric of the Great Perfection draws upon Buddhist and Mahāyoga discourse, and exists in a complementary, even parasitic, relationship to it. Thus, as Prof. Germano puts it, this rhetorical landscape

> ...creates itself through denial, rejection, and negation, resulting in a space with nothing at all. What could this possibly signify in itself, since it is by its own definition nothing? Yet this absence, just as in signification, is utterly defined by what it has excluded—it is not a simple absence, but rather an absence of precise systems, systems that are thus inexorably evoked though now under erasure.[19]

Germano's point is well taken. The language of the Great Perfection Mind Series attempts to evoke a rhetorical space utterly devoid of all ideologies, and yet paradoxically relies on those very ideologies to define itself, and even the rejection of such principles becomes a way of talking about them.

The point here is not merely theoretical—the significance of the use of this apophatic rhetoric in this particular time and place is radically historical inasmuch as it constitutes, and is constituted by, the contingencies of its particular historical circumstances. Great Perfection authors during the tenth and eleventh centuries, whether self-consciously or not, were compelled to address the various competing ideologies and discourses peculiar to the time. Two of the most prominent of these were the discourses of tantra and gradualism, both of which were Indic in origin and character. Hence, whereas Mind Series rhetoric may well have been intended for those who had already gone through training in elaborate tantric meditations and

rituals, it also may be read as being a site for a uniquely Tibetan appropriation and interpretation of these alien ideologies. Speaking of Great Perfection as a "discursive space," Professor Germano succinctly offers the following description:

> The end result is that this becomes a place where genuinely Tibetan transformation of tantra can take place, an innovative appropriation and thoroughgoing revision in the cauldron of Tibetan ideologies, culture and language. This carved out space of absence thus functioned partially to maintain a bounded zone in which Tibetans could think, resisting the domination from the flood of Indic culture through rhetorical negation, and then while still holding it at arm's distance, perform the alchemy of cultural assimilation.[20]

In contrast to the monastic and tantric ideologies that were becoming the dominant discourse, indigenous authors were developing Great Perfection ideology as a competing mode of philosophical speculation. Mind Series texts can thus be read as literary, philosophical and ideological responses to the incursion of Indic discourses of gradualism (and its corollary monasticism) and tantrism, employing innovative, and at times even subversive apophatic rhetoric, as well as rhetoric valorizing "natural" concepts such as "primeval purity" (*ka dag*) or "primordial spontaneity (*ye nas lhun gyis grub pa*), as opposed to the tropes of civilization such as cultivation, law and order, and so forth.[21] While it is certainly plausible to read this development as merely a reaction to the influx of outside influences and ideologies, it is also worth pointing out that that the conflicts and challenges this influx presented instigated a period of profound creativity as well.

HISTORICAL READINGS OF *THE TREASURY OF ABIDING REALITY*

It is the rhetorical legacy of this period of creative ferment that Longchenpa inherited in the fourteenth century, and which he deployed in his own attempts to respond to, and influence, contemporaneous events. In this section I will demonstrate some of the more significant ways the rhetoric diction in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* reflect Longchenpa's various agendas vis-à-vis their historical circumstances. I employ the following rubrics to accomplish this: 1) general history, 2) biographies, and 3) legal codes.

GENERAL HISTORY

As with many other currents in the fourteenth century, the Great Perfection traditions were also moving towards a unification and codification of a sort. Longchenpa, as we have noted throughout our discussion, was the central figure in the systematization of the Great Perfection School, which had theretofore existed only as a loose federation of related religious lineages. This unifying impulse may well have been in partial response to external forces such as the parallel trends towards unification in the religious and political spheres.

By the fourteenth century in Tibet, the so-called "Modern" schools (*gsar ma*) of Tibetan Buddhism were already well established: The Sakyapas had already provided religious guidance to the Mongols and enjoyed a period of political hegemony over much of Tibet; the Kargyüpas were flourishing, and the institution of the re-incarnation of their chief lama, the Karmapa, was already in place; and the doctrinal and moral influence of Atiśa, Dromtönpa, and Kadampa School was becoming pervasive. These schools vigorous movements were largely monastic in character, they tended to be centralized with localized institutional bases, and they were becoming increasingly influential in both the religious and political spheres. These factors represent to a great degree the continuation of the trends initiated by Atiśa and the reformers of the eleventh century.

The gradualist ideology being espoused in the religious sphere was mirrored to some extent in the political sphere as well. It should not be surprising that this should be the case, since the continued health of a hierarchical institution, whether religious or political, depends on the shared assumptions of all participants. Among these assumptions are the notions that an institutional structure must be rational and logical, that its power must emanate from the top downwards, and in particular, that it must have rules, or a system of rewards and punishments. These assumptions played out across the secular and religious realms in the form political and religious unification and centralization, the focus on a central powerful figure who governs from a central and exalted physical and divine position, and the absolute need for both civil and spiritual laws.

By contrast, Longchenpa and others emphasized a *gnostic* as opposed to a "karmic" ethos. That is to say, that he valorized the role of primordiality, awareness and freedom over against the ideologies of law and order based on dualistic conceptions of ethics ("good" and "evil"),

which are in turn based on the notion of the infallibility of cause and effect. In comparing the way in which Great Perfect discourse differs from that of Mahāyoga, David Germano explains the way the former resists rule-bound schemes:

> ...the Great Perfection represents an aestheticized brand of tantra. Transgression is limited/expanded to a thorough resistance to rule-governed hermeneutics of all types, rather than a focus on manifest transgressions involving sexual fluids, ritual sacrifice and shocking public displays. An overwhelming need to invert the law in its socially focused manifestations, in other words, becomes more an imperative to resist the law in its subtle orderings of our being, whether ethical, imaginal, intellectual or otherwise.[22]

Germano argues that Great Perfection rhetoric can be an expression of resistance to the discourses of power that subtly order our experiences on a variety of levels. For reasons discussed above, this was very much the situation in which Longchenpa found himself, and hence he found it necessary to exploit the rhetorical resources at his disposal to respond to all sorts of claims to power.

One of the most persistent ways in which the powerful institutions of the day attempted to inscribe their ideologies on individuals' experiences is through the persuasive rhetoric of ethics. Although Longchenpa addresses the issue of conventional ethics in many other works (and in fact may reasonably be characterized as being quite ethically conservative in general), throughout *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* he resists the normative ethical claims of standard Buddhist discourse with his own words and with scriptural citation. This resistance takes different forms depending on the circumstances. On certain occasions, Longchenpa puts a positive spin on the ultimate irrelevance of such ethical claims:

> Within the essence of transparent (*zang ka*), radiant, and raw (*rjen pa*) awareness there are no fabricated causal networks, and thus falling into cyclic existence and the abyss of pleasure and pain are eradicated. Saṃsāra in its entirety emerges from the unimpeded mode of appearance of cause and effect and yet, since cause and effect are not at all present within our own face—awareness—there is no deviation, no obscuration, no ethical considerations of good or bad.[23]

Here the emphasis is not so much on the flaws of conventional ethics, but on the way in which the individual is ultimately free from their constraints. The persuasive element here is the appeal to the intrinsic goodness of one's natural state. This assertion of an underlying positive reality that is beyond the dualisms of good and bad, cause and effect, and subject and object is made even clearer in the following passage from Longchenpa's root verses:

> **Within the limpid and consummate mind-as-such devoid of eternalism or nihilism**
> **The primordial knowing naturally abides, devoid of subject and object.**
> **Within the naked awareness devoid of causal networks**
> **The singular seminal nucleus abides, devoid of [the ethical norms of] virtue and vice.**
> **Within the unimpeded awareness devoid of center or margins**
> **The underlying intentionality of the totally positive Reality Gestalt naturally abides.**
> **Within the cleansing and perfecting inherent intelligence—the enlightened nucleus of absence**
> **The pure non-objectifying underlying intentionality of the Conqueror radiates.**[24]

In this passage, the reference to the "All Good" (skt. *samantabhadra*, tib. *kun tu bzang po*) Reality Gestalt that underlies and yet transcends dualistic conceptions of morality is explicit, and is appealing as well for its immediacy and accessibility.

On other occasions, however, Longchenpa's tone is decidedly more stark or ironic, and he states his case in more graphic terms. Evoking a mildly humorous tone, Longchenpa cites *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):*

> Hey enlightened core of Adamantine Speech of all the Buddhas! Look at the view—self-emergent primordial wisdom! It is beyond virtue, vice and the cultivation of views—amazing! Since the ground is un-agitated, no matter what physical and verbal activities you have done, you are apart from benefit or harm! Ha Ha![25]

Here the claim is very straightforward—no matter what "good" or "bad" actions one has performed, one never experiences benefit or harm of any kind as a result. This same principle applies even to the most egregious of crimes, as he points out with another citation from the same passage:

> Hey Adamantine Speech yourself! Listen up again! Look at the primordial wisdom that is all pervasive—the emptiness of reality! It is abides together with the unborn [emptiness] from the very beginning—amazing! Although a person, having lifted aloft a sharp sword, may slay several beings with a single stroke, the continuum of that person is completely free from benefit and harm. Ha Ha![26]

Here even the mass-murderer gets off without so much as a slap on the wrist! Why? It is because the dominant ideologies that are concerned with rules and their concomitant rewards and punishments are ultimately false and inadequate models for understanding reality.

If there are no punishments for sins, neither are there rewards for virtue:

> Since this attainment of the indestructible Reality Gestalt is seen by not doing anything—i.e., by relaxing within one's own place—all religious activities enmesh you in a tangle, and hence you are no closer to Buddhahood by even a single hair of a horse's tail. Thus they [i.e., religious activities] are called "the fetters of cyclic existence that have no substance (*don med*)."[27]

Comments like these are radical in their rhetorical rejection of structured religious behavior, and, whether they are intended to be taken literally or not, certainly are playing off of commonly held religious beliefs and dogma as it was being articulated in the Modern Schools.

The above examples have been cast primarily in a doctrinal light—Longchenpa's rhetorical rejections of rule-bound behavior have been aimed primarily at religious ideologies rather than political ones, although to be sure there is an intimate connection between them. However, it is also useful to consider Longchenpa's critique as an alternative voice in the rhetorical struggle to claim and define "Tibet." In a world where religious and secular power are consolidating and centralizing, where boundaries are are rigid and power radiates downwards and outwards, where law and (hierarchical) order are highly valued, Longchenpa offers a competing rhetorical vision of a realm with no fixed center or boundaries, with no high or low status, and no laws or

artificial structures. Emphasizing the nature of "equality" (*mnyam nyid*) that calls many of the basic ideologies of power into question, Longchenpa cites a passage from *The Pouring of Everything into Awareness (rig pa spyi blugs)* composed by Garab Dorje (*dGa' rab rdo rje*):

> Equality is neither conceived in terms of objects nor grasped as an object of the mind, and thus
> You intrinsically remain within the openness in which body and mind are equal.
> All systematic manifestations of awareness light up from that, yet
> By your very nature, you have never stirred from the winds of equality.
> You pour all concrete objects into a state that is free from objects, and they abide in this state of dynamic balance.
> Primordially the duality between objects and the absence of objects never took place, and thus these two are perfectly indivisible.
> You cannot make distinctions between sentient beings and Buddhas, between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
> This is because substantial and non-substantial are equal within the expanse and
> Buddhas and sentient beings are equal within the expanse and
> Conventional and ultimate are equal within the expanse and
> Deficiencies and talents are equal within the expanse and
> High and low, and cardinal and ordinal directions are equal within the expanse.[28]

Taken at face value, this passage is a poetic evocation of an experience of equality that comes either with deep contemplation or some inner realization of the Great Perfection teachings. This serene is our true and natural condition, and we only need to recognize this to achieve it. Towards the end of the citation we see too that our normally stratified view of the world's structure into (exalted) Buddhas and (profane) sentient beings, as well as their respective domains of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra is questioned and undermined. Finally all commonsense notions of spatial, temporal and hierarchical relationships are undercut.

The political or ideological significance of this passage selected with care by Longchenpa, is not difficult to discern. This is a time in Tibet when politics and religion are converging. Ruling clans are increasingly associated with specific sectarian movements. Government officials often have some quasi-religious status. The practice of identifying high religious/political figures as

incarnations of buddhas and bodhisattvas is waxing. Power and status is increasingly defined by one's relationship to the political and *geographical* "center." These are the very notions that are contested in the above passage. The very concepts and structural relationships between buddhas and sentient beings or nirvāṇa and saṃsāra have become assimilated to the political domain. Persons of power or high status (i.e., those with talents), whether secular or religious, are becoming the structural equivalents of buddhas, whereas persons without such status are relegated to the status of "sentient beings" (i.e., those with deficiencies). " Nirvāṇa" comes to symbolize the ideal political state, whereas "saṃsāra" comes to stand for a dysfunctional political condition.

Utilizing Garab Dorje's compelling rhetoric of equality, Longchenpa argues that these distinctions are essentially meaningless. Notions of high and low status, or of central and peripheral loci of power are flawed both logically and intuitively. No single form of discourse, whether "ultimate" or "conventional," is inherently more valid than another. Spatial and conceptual maps of power are defined through dualistic binary relationships thus have no more than relative validity. It is significant, however, that although Longchenpa and Great Perfection literature generally dismiss the categories of high and low and all of the implied symbolic meaning that accompany them, they will turn around and characterize the Great Perfection view as being at the "summit" of all views (*lta ba'i rtse*), from which the practitioner may assume a "god's eye view" of the inferior perspectives.

There are several possible interpretations of this provocative use of language. It is interesting to consider, for example, the possibility that Longchenpa was, perhaps unconsciously, attempting to evoke an an imaginal "Tibet" that was more consonant with indigenous Tibetan values and symbols. Although Longchenpa was himself an extremely cultivated and educated man, and in fact possessed many of the same prejudices about status, and proximity to the center that he appears to be criticizing in these passages, it is also very likely that he conceived of himself as a representative of the "ancient" or authentic form of Tibetan religion and culture. As such, it would be his responsibility to speak for these values, especially as new doctrines and practices are flooding into Tibet and threatening to overwhelm them. The underlying symbolic motif here is one of the romanticized Tibetan pastoralist, who wanders freely without concern for artificial boundaries or man-made rules. Longchenpa

addresses this crucial issue of boundaries in the following passage from *The Array of Sublime Jewels (nor bu 'phra bkod):*

> Since the essential characteristic of the sky is originally pure from the beginning,
> Materiality is absent within the Reality-Gestalt itself—you do not even have to think about it.
> Within this great wide open space in which exterior and interior are absent,
> The vast reality is free from boundaries and limits and concrete existence is absent.[29]

This stylized nomad or pastoralist is not constrained by fences, obeys only the laws of nature, and does not depend on self-conscious "cultivation" to obtain a livelihood. Their lifestyles are rhetorically portrayed as uncomplicated (*spros bral*), stress-free (*rtsol bral*), easy and comfortable (*bde po*), relaxing (*cog gzhag*), and so forth. These images, rooted in Great Perfection terminology, are juxtaposed with their opposites—elaboration (*spros pa*), effort (*rtsol ba*) and so on—rhetorically identified with the lesser philosophical perspectives of competing religious and political doctrines. The question whether a pastoralist's life is easier, simpler, and more natural than anyone else's in *fact* is not the issue here. Rather, it is whether the rhetorical evocation is an effective strategy to stir nostalgia for a "truer" or more compelling vision of Tibet's past and future in the hearts of his countrymen.

Thus, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* can be interpreted as being deeply informed by the general historical trends of centralization and institutionalization. These tendencies were evident in both the political and religious spheres, and the rhetoric deployed in the text clearly addresses them, although it does so in a generalized fashion without identifying specific targets.

BIOGRAPHIES

We have already considered Longchenpa's biography in some detail. In particular, we saw how he was not averse to either inserting quasi-autobiographical elements or social critiques into his writings, especially his works of narrative, polemics, and elegy.

The Treasury of Abiding Reality also reflects the pressures or influences of Longchenpa's life, but in different, less obvious ways. Nowhere, for instance, are there thinly veiled but unmistakable autobiographical references to some righteous heavily anthropomorphized animal that is forced to flee central Tibet due to decadent influences. In the present text,

Longchenpa approaches these issues with greater stealth and tact, using language more playfully, ironically, and even subversively. Thus, whereas in a text such as his diatribe against the Khampa students at Sangphu (see Chapter 4) he could directly attack his opponents' poor moral character, sloth, and so on, in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* he is stylistically compelled to slyly call all conventional assumptions about morality into question. In this context, perhaps part of his message is that slavish adherence to rules of morality actually *contribute* to a degradation of morals.

In reading *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* in light Longchenpa's biography, the key series of events to bear in mind are those connected with his well-documented conflict with Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen. Longchenpa was, as has been demonstrated, a man with a sense of his own importance and role to play in the nation's spiritual and cultural life. We know that he felt a strong sense of connection with central Tibet and its rich historical and religious legacies, and we know also that he felt beset in many ways by events in central Tibet beyond his control, such as military activities, the takeover of Samye monastery, the poor conduct of monks, and so forth.

This brief biographical sketch already sets the scene for Longchenpa to be predisposed to dislike Jangchup Gyaltsen, at least in the abstract. He abhorred the downward spiral of the nation's spiritual and cultural life in central Tibet, and it is easy to imagine that he held the leaders of the various warring factions (the Sakyas, Dringungpas, Phakmodrupas, and so on) responsible for this unfortunate situation. Chief among these leaders was, of course, Jangchup Gyaltsen. In Longchenpa's mind the arrogance and aggression of such men were likely significant causes for the destruction of political stability and the Tibetan way of life.

As we have seen, Jangchup Gyaltsen was involved with various litigations and legal entanglements throughout his life. His biographies devote pages to the many hearings, negotiations, and arbitrations he participated in, primarily to secure legal rights to lands and property for himself and his clan. His life appears to bounce back and forth between military conflicts and judicial proceedings, and these experiences may well have become an organizing metaphor for him as he finally wrested power from the his rivals and established his political preeminence in Neudong in 1355. After his successful military campaign to reunify the Tibetan polity and cast off foreign (i.e., Mongol) interference and influence in matters of state, Jangchup Gyaltsen is known to have invoked potent symbols of Tibet's past glories from the Dynastic

Period such as ceremonial practices and, significantly, legal codes.[30] In fact, historians generally agree that Jangchup Gyaltsen's revitalization of legal codes, with their concomitant schedules of punishments, was one his most important acts as the newly installed Tibetan leader. Thus, by 1355, when Longchenpa was already ensconsed in Bhutan, but likely before he had yet composed *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, Jangchup Gyaltsen had very visably reinstituted the rule of law and judicial procedures in central Tibet.

As far as we know, Longchenpa never tried to promote himself overtly as a political figure, but he did become involved with the shadowy leader of the Drigungpas, Gompa Künrin. Although the biographies characterize their relationship as strictly spiritual, Jangchup Gyaltsen clearly saw it in different terms. For instance, Ta'i Situ perceived Longchenpa's seemingly innocent renovation of a ruined temple at the request of Gompa Künrin as nothing less than a political act, and the mere fact that he was identified as Künrin's "main teacher" (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*) became the basis for his persecution. Rather than face *prosecution*, however, Longchenpa eludes Ta'i Situ's soldiers and flees for Bhutan. We know this from his earliest biography composed by his personal disciple Chödrak Zangpo, who is likely to have heard this account either from the master himself, or from his closest associates, which is a fair indication that this incident was not fabricated or especially embellished by the later tradition.

After this sequence of events, Longchenpa arrives at Bumthang in Bhutan, probably in 1354, but certainly no later than 1355. This is exactly the time during which Jangchup Gyaltsen, who was already the *de facto* ruler of Tibet, was consolidating his political control over the nation and instituting his new ceremonial and judicial practices. Thus Longchenpa has the time and leisure to reflect on the nature of his experiences and to attempt to make sense of them in an environment that is far more like his idealized conception of central Tibet than central Tibet itself is at that time. We know from his didactic animal fables, composed in the late 1340s and early 1350s, that the normally hallowed precincts of Samye and central Tibet are overrun with armed conflicts and poor moral conduct. Bhutan, however, is characterized in bucolic, pseudo-mystical terms—a virtual pure-land. *Bhutan* (and not Tibet) is the place where nature is free to take its course and spontaneous healing and visions take place; Bhutan is the land free from strict "rules" and boundaries; Bhutan is a land of peace and harmony, where one is free to practice religious pursuits without interference; Bhutan is the realm where Tibetans can go to be "real" Tibetans, the periphery that in some sense *is* the center.

And so it is in this environment that Longchenpa begins to ruminate on the deeper significance of his observations and experiences, and in particular on the nature of rules, vows, and governing principles, and to begin to formulate an alternative vision of the "laws" underlying our lives.

LEGAL CODES

In contrast to the sorts of religious and civic laws based on rewards and punishments being articulated in his beloved central Tibet, Longchenpa sought to express an all-embracing metaphysical or "natural" set of guidelines that were essentially positive in nature. Jangchup Gyaltsen is concerned with establishing highly stratified procedures and laws (*zhal lce*) relating to a variety of issues. Among these are laws relating to top officials (*sne mo las 'dzin gyi zhal lce*), distinguising truth from falsehood when listening to appeals (*zhu bzhes bden rdzun gyi zhal lce*), the arrest, binding, and imprisoning of criminals (*bzung bkyig khrims ra'i zhal lce*), extracting a confession by means of torture (*nag can khrag bcor gyi zhal lce*), fines (*dran 'dzin chad las kyi zhal lce*), taxation (*hor 'dra za rkang gi zhal lce*), and compensations for murder, theft, rape, injury, among others.[31] Longchenpa, on the other hand, focuses on a different but equally structured sixteen-fold theme. Although we have already discussed this rubric, it will be useful to revisit the relevant passages briefly. Longchenpa states the bare outline of the structure in his root verse:

> **The final meaning of the essence of the mind, space, and esoteric**
> **precepts series resides in the four,**
> **Absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and unity,**
> **Each of which has four: indictment, confinement, binding,**
> **And passing judgment.**[32]

The essential meaning of Great Perfection teachings can be condensed into the four basic categories of absence (*med pa*), spontaneity (*lhun grub*), simplicity (*phyal pa*), and unity (*gcig bu*). Longchenpa then elaborates on his own pregnant verse:

> The teaching that condenses all phenomena into the enumeration of four great commitments (*dam tshig*), i.e., the final meaning of the natural Great Perfection, has four parts consisting of the following: (1) There is an absence (*med pa*) of an abiding

> nature of all phenomena; (2) All phenomena are primordially and spontaneously present (*lhun gyis grub*); (3) Since all phenomena are neither fragmented nor polarized, they are uniform/simplicity (*phyal pa*); and (4) All phenomena are collected into the sphere of the solitary (*gcig bu*) self-emergent primordial wisdom.[33]

The commentarial passage provides a new clue as to the character of these categories—they are referred to as "great commitments," a term that almost certainly is playing off the use of the same term as it is used in certain arcane tantric practices and rituals. In the context of tantric initiation ceremonies, the devotee is required to a series of esoteric vows and "pledges" or "commitments" (skt. *samaya*, tib. *dam tshig*) which one promises to observe strictly until death, and failure to do so is understood to result in dire karmic consequences. Hence, like other legal and ethical discourses upon which he may be subtly commenting in this text, Longchenpa is also couching his scheme in terms of the faithful obedience to a set of rules. The rules he would have us observe, however, absence, spontaneity, simplicity and unty, are strangely counterintuitive and incongruous with our normal understanding of what it means to obey rules, for they require no special effort or attention. This is the part of the playful paradox that Longchenpa attempts to achieve in his analysis of the rules by which we must abide. He elaborates on this theme by citing the *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

> My secret commitments, which do not require maintenance,
> Are endowed with non-degeneration, primordial protection, and certainty.
> Since the primordial gnosis of inherent intelligence
> Lacks both an object to be protected and a means of protection,
> It is devoid of both degeneration and non-degeneration.
> Since I do not maintain all the verbal categories contrived by the eight lower vehicles,
> We speak of so-called "absence."
> Because there is freedom from the commitments of the lower vehicles and
> Since one's three gateways are vast and expansive,
> We speak of so-called "simplicity."
> Without even the possibility of transgression, the means for sustaining

> The vows that do not need to be sustained
> Is the primordial wisdom of inherent intelligence that is the one and only,
> And hence we speak of so-called "unity."
> The one and only primordial wisdom of inherent intelligence
> Is thoroughly maintained without activity or exertion,
> And hence we speak of so-called "spontaneity."[34]

By citing this passage, Longchenpa creates a fascinating tension between the imperative of abiding by these strict guidelines on the one hand, and only being able to do so through the strict observation of relaxation on the other. These commitments are to be strictly observed, and yet they do not require maintenance, and in fact they are impossible to transgress. They are observed or protected only through the *lack* of any special effort. These playful inversions are clearly aimed at questioning certain basic assumptions underlying notions of law and ethics.

These four commitments are then further subdivided into the suspiciously legalistic categories of indictment, confining, binding and passing judgment. Longchenpa elaborates: in his commentary:

> These four are each divided into four semantic classes consisting of: (1) indicting (*gnad bkrol*) within [the courtroom of] suchness, (2) confining (*'gag bsdam*) within [the prison of] the actual self-emergent primordial wisdom, (3) binding (*chings su bcing*) within [the cell of] the unproduced which is beyond the domain of thought, and (4) convicting (*la bzla ba*) within that which transcends the causal networks of activity and striving. Hence, this presentation of the sixteen doctrinal categories is the presentation of the crucial rubrics of this treatise.[35]

Inspired by the hermeneutical prowess of Herbert Guenther, I have taken the liberty in my translation above to insert in brackets terms that will highlight what I consider to be the juridical flavor of this explanatory passage.[36] Although not present in the text, these additions strike me as particularly evocative, especially considering the circumstances under which the text was written.

Even without these admittedly provocative insertions, the literal meaning of these four terms still strongly suggests a judicial reading. The term "indict" (*gnad bkrol*), for instance, literally means to release or uncover the key point or pith-essence of a thing, which is very

much like building a case through investigation before laying the charges. The term "confine" (*'gag bsdam*) literally means to "bind within a nexus," and hence has strong resonances with the idea of bondage or confinement. Moreover, Longchenpa was no doubt aware of the polyvalent meaning of the term *'gag bsdam*, which can either mean "bind within a nexus" or "stop and bind," which clearly conveys the sense of an arrest and initial binding, much the way fugitives are often handcuffed upon being arrested in our society. The literal meaning of the term "binding" (*chings su bcing ba*) is quite unambiguous; it means "binding into fetters" and carries with it the overtones of incarceration. Finally, the term "convicting" (*la bzla ba*) literally means "passing over a mountain pass," and is generally interpreted to mean "coming to a conclusion," "making a decision," or "determining," any one of which could legitimately be rendered "convicting" or "passing judgment."

Although none of these second four terms are legal terms *per* se, they distinctly evoke an atmosphere of investigation, apprehension, capture, and judgment, and in fact they do echo the very sorts of concerns and language that was being deployed by Jangchup Gyaltsen in the civic domain. Thus, for example, when Longchenpa exhorts his readers to "indict," "arrest," "bind," and "convict" all phenomena into absence, spontaneity, and so forth, he metaphorically evokes images of a minister or magistrate attempting to distinguish truth from falsehood (*zhu bzhes bden rdzun*), or of a criminal being arrested, bound, and imprisoned (*bzung bkyig khrims ra*). Although we will never know whether or not Longchenpa was even conscious of the legal codes being disseminated by Jangchup Gyaltsen after his ascension to power in 1354, it is nevertheless remarkable that he should employ terms and concepts that so closely mirror the legal structures and vocabulary.

RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

The previous sections have been concerned primarily (but not exclusively) with the historical, biographical, and even legal analyses of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality's* rhetoric. Here we turn our attention to the text's rhetoric from the viewpoint of religion. The most obvious level of religious interpretation in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is that of doctrinal exposition. Hence, in the previous chapter we spent a considerable amount of time situating the text within various historical and doxographical schemata. It is important not to overlook the traditional ways in which a text is presented and represented, and in fact without an understanding of this "surface

level" rhetoric, it becomes exceedngly difficult to comprehend the so-called "depth rhetoric" being considered in the present chapter. Hence, this section will focus on the more obscure dimensions and subtexts of the text, which are nevertheless explicitly concerned with religious belief and practice.

PRAXIS INTERPRETATIONS

A cursory glance at *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* suggests that it is a text not greatly concerned with the practical dimension of meditation or other spiritual practices. On the contrary, it seems far more intent on questioning such practices, and much of its rhetoric is in fact strongly *anti-*practice, arguing instead for the *futility* of self-cultivation or self-discipline. The following passage from his commentary conveys the overall attitude expressed in the text:

> Awareness which is your own true perspective is not present anywhere. Hence, the doctrines of view, meditation, conduct, and fruit, the spiritual levels and paths that are characterized by training and traveling, generation and completion stages of meditation that are involved with characteristics,[37] commitments involved with external objects of observation, spiritual activities that are to be practiced, primordial wisdom that is well-achieved and so forth are completely absent in it.[38]

Here Longchenpa indulges in a bit of characteristic apophatic rhetoric in a pretty typical (by Great Perfection standards) rejection of traditional Tibetan Buddhist pieties such as the quartet of view (*lta ba*), meditation (*sgom pa*), conduct (*spyod pa*), and fruit (*'bras bu*), and so forth. More significantly in terms of the present discussion, he specifically mentions the absence of the Buddhist hierarchical structure *par excellence*, the spiritual levels and paths (*sa lam*), as well as generation stage (*bskyed rim*) and completion stage (*rdzogs rim*) meditations usually associated with Mahāyoga or Highest Yoga Tantra (*bla na med pa'i rgyud*).

These negations are characteristic of Mind Series rhetoric in particular, and there are numerous similar references in quotations throughout *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, especially in those from *The All-Creating King*. Longchenpa also cites several other texts to make a similar point. *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)*, for instance, states:

> Hey Adamantine Speech! I, the All Good, teach that, due to the essential point that reality is devoid of discursive elaboration, a being who continually cultivates the

meditation on emptiness and a person who has not fixed his or her mind on emptiness even for an instant lack even the slightest difference with respect to awakening.[39]

Here paradox or perhaps irony is the key strategy. A person who engages in prolonged meditation on emptiness (*stong pa nyid*) and one who has never even meditated on it once are *exactly the same* in terms of their awakening.

Elsewhere, however, Longchenpa indicates that there may be a special form of contemplative practice that is appropriate for Great Perfection followers. To draw the distinction between "good" and "bad" meditation, he cites *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal)*:

Within the great non-dual self-emergent bliss that I have explained,
You are free from the extremes of presence or absence of meditation.
Within the realization of the powerful wisdom, the dimension of inherent intelligence,
The verbal conventions of meditation and non-meditation completely fall away.
You dwell in the natural range of non-dual great bliss, and
Through letting yourself go without conscious effort you achieve a completely seamless unity.
Since its flow is uninterrupted it is like the River Ganges.
I teach this in order to benefit those possessing the highest faculties.[40]

This passage starts much the way his comment just above did, that is, by expressing the absence of meditation within the blissful non-dual awareness. In fact, even the absence is absent! The citation goes on to identify that it is the "verbal conventions" (*tha snyad*) of both meditaion *and* non-meditation that is being rejected. The last portion of the passage then turns to a discussion of a meditation-like state in which one simply lets oneself go without any conscious effort, whereby one achieves an experience best characterized as an "uninterrupted flow" (*rgyun ma chad*).

This passage is alluding to what Longchenpa elsewhere refers to as the "natural contemplation" (*rang bzhin gyis bsam gtan*), a form of meditation that is much more palatable to

his Great Perfection sensibilities. He further characterizes this "natural" contemplation in the following way:

> When, having seen the awareness without wavering from one's own bed, the yogic adept who abides in that range discovers the natural contemplation, there being no clinging to a purposefully-focused mind, all appearances never waver from their natural bed of contemplation. Then, due to the dawning [of appearances], consciousness is illuminated, and since finding the depth-contemplation is the union of inner calm and incisive vision, you are pure by yourself without needing to abandon the deviations and obscurations of contemplation such as lethargy and excitement.[41]

Here we encounter the rhetoric of relaxation: the practitioner discovers the natural contemplation without ever even leaving his or her own bed, and there is no purposive activity or mental focusing whatsoever. This characterization, of course, stands in direct opposition to the forms of meditation being promoted in almost all other schools of Tibetan Buddhism at the time, particularly generation stage in which one focuses on the minute details of deities, and imaginatively "creates" universes peopled with divinities. In this form of meditation, however, consciousness becomes naturally illuminated and there is no need to abandon the standard obstacles of lethargy and excitement in one's practice. Moreover, in an interesting rhetorical maneuver Longchenpa identifies the "depth contemplation" (skt. *samādhi*, tib. *ting nge 'dzin*) with the union of inner calm and incisive vision (*zhi lhag bzung 'brel*), a standard Buddhist term for a high state of meditation. Thus, while seeking to distance himself from certain common Buddhist tropes of meditation, he seeks also to appropriate others, which rhetorically strengthens his claims to authenticity.

Longchenpa was aware that even his apophatic characterization of these highly unusual, spontaneous, and intuitive meditative states could easily be misinterpreted or even obfuscate the inner meaning of what he was trying to express. Hence, like adherents to literary deconstruction, he constantly turns his focused analytical gaze back on the on the words which evaporate in an endless string of signifiers:

> Even if you try to express [this natural spontaneous contemplation] with all these terms such as "uncultivated" or "undistracted," you are still bound by intellectual

> entanglements (*blo 'jur bu*). In this context, the uncultivated contemplation, which is [analogous to] the flow of a river, is the uninterrupted flow of balance that equalizes [whatever appears] into the luminous empty natural awakening. The continuous simplicity in which nets [of conceptuality] dissolve by relaxing into a natural flow with respect to the unobstructed recognition so that, when awareness shines, it does so unrestrictedly in and as whatever external objects appear. Since [all appearances] unobstructedly shine from within the unproduced awareness and dissolve into the open space of unproduced awareness, they become transformed into the contemplation that is the flow of the river of natural awakening.[42]

Longchenpa undercuts even his own rhetoric of negation with an appeal to *experience*—the experience of an uninterrupted flow of balance into luminous empty awareness in which all conceptuality naturally dissipates.

These passages concerning the so-called "natural contemplation" tend to emphasize two key moods. First, they evoke an atmosphere of pure purity into which all phenomena and conceptuality dissolve naturally. Words such as "balance" (*mnyam nyid*), "spontaneity" (*lhun grub*), "flow" (*rgyun ma chad*), among others are used to arouse some intuitive understanding of this experience. Second, the passages portray a state in which awareness, objects, appearances all manifest in and as colorful lights and visions, utilizing a vocabulary of illumination and vision. It is not an accident that Longchenpa characterizes the "natural contemplation" in these terms, since each of these characteristic moods alludes to the two highest forms of Great perfection "meditation," those of "breakthrough" (*khregs chod*) and "direct transcendence" (*thod rgal*).

Thus, although the language of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is predominantly anti-practice, it does valorize a certain form of quasi-meditation called "natural contemplation," which it further equates with the union of the standard Buddhist meditation practices of "calm abiding" (skt. *śamatha*, tib. *zhi gnas*) and "special insight" (skt. *vipaśyana*, tib. *lhag mthong*). Moreover, the language used to describe the so-called natural contemplation is strongly reminiscent of the "breakthrough" and "direct transcendence" practices unique to the Great Perfection tradition. In fact, towards the end of the treatise, Longchenpa refers explicitly to each of these practices in uncharacteristically technical terms:

> 'Breakthrough' (*khregs chod*) is the exhaustion of the elements through completing the dimension of original purity, while 'direct transcendence" (*thod rgal*) is the purification/dissolution of the elements through the perfection of spontaneous presence. These two are similar to the mere dissolution of the external and internal corporeality. However, in "breakthrough" since one is released into original purity in an instant through the individual atomic particles, the light-body does not appear, while in "direct transcendence" the light-body is the mere factor for attaining the great transference. There is a difference between "breakthrough" and "direct transcendence" in terms of whether or not the light-body is present, but there is no difference with respect to manner in which one is released into the site of original purity.[43]

In the context of the present study, what is interesting about the explanatory passage above is less its theoretical or doctrinal content than its rather abrupt stylistic departure from the text to that point. This passage represents the only sustained technical discussion of any meditation practice found within the text, and is, along with the more general discussions of the "natural contemplation," one of the few treatments of meditation in positive terms.

Thus we see that although the seemingly taboo topic of praxis is in fact addressed implicitly and explicitly throughout the text. First, while somewhat disingenuously claiming to reject religious codes of conduct and targeted spiritual disciples and practices, we find instead that perhaps the greatest portion of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is in fact devoted to them, albeit in a seditious and parasitical way. Just when the reader thinks they have understood that practices such as meditation and so forth have no place in the Great Perfection, Longchenpa surprises us with his discussion of the natural contemplation, which he characterizes in almost naturalistic terms. Whereas the discussion of the natural contemplation is somewhat vague, a careful reading of the relevant passages reveals that they actually refer to the breakthrough and direct transcendence practices peculiar to the Great Perfection system. Finally, although *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* cannot in any way be construed as a meditation or practice manual, or even a commentary on any specific contemplative system, it does briefly enter into a learned and technical discourse on these very Great Perfection practices.

SUBVERSION OF RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS

We have seen throughout our rhetorical analyses of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* several recurring themes and patterns. One of the most prevalent is the tendency to question or challenge *a priori* assumptions underlying dominant systems of religious belief. This peculiarity of the text is so pervasive, in fact, that one can seldom look at any one strand of discourse, whether social, political, or biographical, in isolation from it. Even in the preceding discussions it was nearly impossible to consider Longchenpa's critque of legalism, for example, apart from a tangle of related religious issues. In this brief section I shall draw out one or two of Longchenpa's more striking examples of subversive relgious language from within *The Treasury of Abiding Reality.*

The most common form of religious subversion in Longchenpa's treatise is the radical questioning of the karmic theory of retribution's validity. We have already examined several dramatic examples of this rhetorical strategy in the previous chapter. Longchenpa cites a classic example of this from the "vajra-jokes" found in the *Heap of Jewels Tantra (rin po che spungs pa):*

> Hey enlightened core of Adamantine Speech of all the Buddhas! Look at the view—self-emergent primordial wisdom! It is beyond virtue, vice and the cultivation of views—amazing! Since the ground is un-agitated, no matter what physical and verbal activities you have done, you are free from benefit or harm! Ha Ha![44]

In a Buddhist context, it is quite shocking to say that all your activities have no ethical force to them. This flies in the face of normative Buddhist interpretations of karma, and so forth. This is the joke.

Elsewhere, Longchen cites a passage from *The Array of Sublime Jewels Tantra (nor bu 'phra bkod)* in which it is stated that caste background, wealth, and status should not be the determining criteria for determining who is a suitable candidate for Great Perfection instruction:

> If all the qualities are complete in a person,
> Then it is appropriate to teach even
> Butchers, Whores, and
> Members of the rag-picker caste.[45]

This rhetoric mirrors a similar passage in the Pali canon in which Buddha identifies a true brahmin as one who keeps pure morality. Here too, a person's character rather than his or her external status should be the deciding factor in determining their suitability as students. Although this is more or less a truism in Buddhism, the fact that Longchenpa thought to include this passage may suggest that such magnanimity may have been the exception rather than the rule.

In the previous chapter we briefly reflected upon Longchenpa's bold endorsement of Ha-shang Mahāyāna and his views. Longchenpa was surely aware that this mand and his positions were in extreme disfavor in most intellectual and political circles of the time, and hence it is difficult to imagine that he didn't have a specific agenda when invoking his memory. Of Ha-shang he states the following:

> The Great Master Ha-shang [Mahāyāna] has stated [such], and therefore although at that time those with inferior intellects were unable to comprehend it, in fact it is still like that. This is kept secret from those in the lower vehicles because since they are unable to comprehend it, and hence they slander it, at which time, due to that karma, they fall into the unfortunate realms.[46]

Ha-shang was known for having taught the possibility of a sudden awakening of the enlightened state through the absence of mental activity. This position proved very controversial, and was to provide the pretext for proscribing the Jonang order. From the religious-dogmatic point of view the proponents of the Indian Buddhist school had triumphed over those of Ha-shang's tradition. Yet, records of both the Jonangpa and Great Perfection traditions claim the victory of the Ha-shang tradition at the Samye Council. Thus the Great Perfection and Jonang teachings only became a deviation from the 'unvarnished truth' when later Tibetan apologists identified themselves with the Indian parties. They attacked their opponents of continuing the mistaken doctrines of the Chinese party in order to take precedence mainly over the teachings of the Nyingmapa order, which were legitimized by being traced back to the time of the great "religious kings" (*chos rgyal*).[47] Hence, in addition to an already somewhat controversial doctrinal point, Longchenpa's comments clearly play off the political antecedents as well, and may be construed as his rhetorical attempt to (re)establish Nyingma claims to legitimacy and prestige.

Another remarkable instance of Longchenpa's inclination to make or cite outrageous assertions is found in his citation from Śrī Siṃha's *Sky Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen mka' la lding):*

> One who is cast into the cage of intellectualism will not pass beyond the three
> realms.
> One who relaxes within an idiot's uncontrived mindset
> Does not abide within either saṃsāra or nirvāṇa.[48]

The juxtaposition here is obvious: in a contest between intellectuals versus fools, the fools are the clear winners. The implied connection is between the term "intellectualism" (*sgrin po'i sems*) and the extremely common term for "scholar," "expert," or "wise" (*mkhas pa*). This latter term was a very exalted term in Tibetan religious discourse that conveyed prestige and an aura of learning and authority. Sakya Paṇḍita's famous and influential work *The Treasury of Eloquent Sayings (sa skya legs bshad)* devotes the entire first chapter to praising scholar/experts, and this trend of valorizing men of learning persists in Tibetan society right until the present day. Longchenpa's praise for the idiot's mindset is thus quite outrageous and incendiary.

Another problematic but fascinating assertion made in *The Treaasury of Abiding Reality* concerns the cosmological significance of sound. Seminal Heart literature is filled with disscussions of cosmogony, and in fact Longchenpa's own *Treasury of Words and Meanings* is a prolonged meditation on just this topic. Nevertheless, in my experience, it is highly unusual to encounter textual evidence within the Buddhist tradition that identifies the primordial ground from which all things ultimately emerge as *sound*. Longchenpa, however, locates and cites just such a source from the *Heap of Jewels Tantra (rin po che spungs pa):*

> By way of the difference between the three times and the timeless,[49]
> There is a singular continuity in which there are no junctures or boundaries, and
> thus
> There is no beginning, middle, or end.
> The enumerations of time being primordially exhausted,
> There is a great sameness, and out of the sound of this great sameness
> There is a shining forth which is not predetermined and even

Within the ensuing presence of neurotic conceptuality, it remains in itself devoid of
any certainty (*cha med pa*).
The entire dimension of the natural Great Perfection
Is contained within the maṇḍalic center of the intellect.
It is not something manifest, neither is it an object. Even neurotic conceptuality
Does not need to be eradicated, since it ceases right where it stands.
The root of the dimmed awareness that has never experienced straying,
Being primordially eliminated without analysis, just is (*'dug*).

Although this discussion does not depart significantly from other cosmological speculations founs in the Seminal Heart literature, it is noteworthy for its emphasizing the role of sound. Other Tibetan Buddhist traditions already criticized the Seminal Heart discourse on cosmogony as erring on the extreme of eternalism, but this passage takes the potential for heresy to new levels. This is because it so closely parallels the doctrines found in Kaśmiri Śaivism in which pure consciousness, identified with soundless sound, manifests itself into subjects and objects through its own vibrations.[50]

These few examples just hint at the extent to which Longchenpa in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is constantly challenging and undermining seemingly unproblematic Buddhist assumptions. Apologists may rationalize some of his more controversial assertions by claiming that they are only intended to be understood in the context of the highest Great Perfection view. Other assertions, however, clearly fly in the face of normative Tibetan religious and cultural interpretations, and as such must be taken as the bold provocations they appear to be.

---

1 See Douglas Fox, *The Heart of Buddhist Wisdom* (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), p. 44 et seq.; Richard Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 25.

2 See Samten Karmay, "The Doctrinal Position of rDzogs chen from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Centuries," in *The Arrow and the Spindle*, p. 72.

3 For an interesting discussion of Sakya Paṇḍita's perception of Ha-shang and his impact on Tibetan Buddhism, see Roger Jackson, "Sa skya Paṇḍita's Account of the bSam yas debate: History as Polemic," in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies 5:2*, 1985.

---

[4] David Germano, "Architecture and Absence, p. 243.

[5] For a translation of this and other key texts by *Atiśa* , see Richard Sherburne, trans., *The Complete Works of Atiśa Śri Dipamkāra Jñāna Jo-bo-rje* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2000).

[6] This emphasis on the monastic lifestyle is made clear by the fact, for example, that Atiśa includes a lengthy section on the "monastic life" in his discussion of "higher conduct," and goes so far as to suggest that observation of the higher vows is impossible without first observing the monastic rules. See Sherburne, *The Complete Works of Atiśa* , p. 111 et seq.

[7] *dge slong gi sdom pa rnam par dag pa ni theg pa chen po'i gzhi phul du byung zhing khyad par 'phags pa yin no zhes bcom ldan 'das de ltar bzhed so//.* See Sherburne, *Complete Works of Atiśa* , p. 129.

[8] *so sor thar pa rigs bdun dang/ de bzhin gshegs pas bshad pa la/ tshangs spyod dpal ni mchog yin te/ dge slong sdom pa dag tu bzhed/.* See Sherburne, *Complete Works of Atiśa* , p. 9.

[9] See Turrell Wylie, "Mar.pa's Tower: Notes on Local Hegemons in Tibet," in *History of Religions* (Vol. 3, 1963): 278-291, and Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, p. 457.

[10] See Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, p. 458.

[11] See David Germano, "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*)," in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (17:2, 1994): 204-205.

[12] *rdzogs chen ming btags chos log bod du dar/ lta ba phyin ci log gi sar thogs pa/.* See Samten Karmay, "The Ordinance of *lHa Bla-ma Ye-Shes-'Od,"* in *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet* (Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1998), p. 10.

[13] Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, pp. 470-471.

[14] See Atiśa, *Gathering the Essence (snying po bsdu ba)* in Sherburne, *Complete Works of Atiśa* , pp. 368-369. (*pha rol phyin drug la sogs pa/ mnyam gzhag langs pa'i sbyor ba yis/ lam lnga rim gyis bgrod byas te/ sgrib pa rnam gnyis bsal byas nas/ tshogs gnyis yongs su rdzogs pa las/ 'bras bu sku gsum bsgrub par bya/*).

[15] Germano, "Architecture and Absence," 205.

[16] Germano, "Architecture and Absence," 207.

[17] Most of these principles are standard in non-tantric Buddhism, though in the context of Great Perfection the definitions emphasize the tantric connection. See Germano, "Architecture and Absence," 209n.

[18] See *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*, in Vol. 1 of the gTing skyes Edition (Tk) of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum)* (Thimpu: 1973), 32.2-32.4. Cited in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, p. 62.

[19] Germano, "Architecture and Absence," 209.

[20] Germano, "Architecture and Absence," 209.

[21] See Samten Karmay, *The Great Perfection: A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), pp. 9-10.

[22] Germano, "Architecture and Absence," 231-232.

[23] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 37.5-37.6.

[24] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 47.3-47.4.

[25] *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)*, cited in Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 42.2-42.3.

[26] *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)*, cited in Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 42.

[27] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 50.1-50.2.

[28] *rig pa spyi blugs*, cited in Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 37.7-38.3.

[29] *nor bu 'phra bkod*, cited in Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 142.

[30] Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, p. 527.

[31] See Dalai Lama V, *History of Tibet*, pp. 141-142; Dung-dkar blo-bzang 'phrin-las, *Merging of Religious and Secular*, p. 54; Phun-tshogs tshe-ring, *deb ther kun gsal me long*, p. 213. Shakabpa mentions thirteen rather than fifteen laws. See Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, p. 82.

[32] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 29.1.

[33] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 29.1-29.3.

[34] *thig le kun gsal*, cited in Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 29-30.

[35] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 30.2-30.3.

[36] See Herbert Guenther, *The Dynamics of Being*, 19.

[37] The term *mtshan bcas* here appears to be related to the discussion of yoga with signs (*mtshan bcas kyi rnal 'byor*) and the yoga without signs (*mtshan med pa'i rnal 'byor*), i.e., discursive and abstract meditations, found in the class of Action Tantra (*Kriyatantra, bya ba'i rgyud*). See Jeffrey Hopkins, et al. *Tantra in Tibet* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1989?). mKhan-po Tshe-dbang mentions that in rDzogs-chen, there is not even the visualization of the finger of a deity, never mind the whole body, maṇḍala, etc.

[38] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 39.5-39.6.

[39] *rin po che spungs pa*, cited in Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 44.5-44.6.

[40] *thig le kun gsal*, cited in Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 53.6-53.7.

[41] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 54.2-54.4.

[42] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 98.7-99.1.

[43] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, pp. 144.1-

[44] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 42.

[45] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 146.

[46] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, 68.7-69.1.

[47] See Andreas Grushke, "The Jonangpa Order: Causes for the downfall, conditions of the survival and current situation of a presumedly extinct Tibetan-Buddhist School." Paper presented at the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden, 2000.

[48] Longchenpa, *sde gsum snying po'i don 'grel*, p. 48.

[49] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 10, 1995) mentions that the difference referred to in this line is the difference between ordinary time (*dus gsum*), i.e., normal conceptions of past, present and future, and timelessness (*dus med*), i.e., time reckoned in terms of the Great Perfection commonly known as *ka dag gi dus*.

[50] See Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 247-248.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The Treasury of Abiding Reality, is a radically contingent polyphonic work of religious literature. In addition to being the profound and elegant statement of Great Perfection philosophy it purports to be, it may also be read through a variety of different interpretive lenses. It may thus be understood to function in a variety of different ways, and serve a variety of religious, political, and personal agendas. Its so-called "rhetoric of naturalness" is an essential rhetorical strategy in the text, and Longchenpa's skillful use of this rhetoric furthered his own diverse agendas in the context of fourteenth century Tibet.

The Treasury of Abiding Reality must be understood within the context of the fourteenth century, the time it was composed. This period was marked by several noteworthy historical trends and events. Among these are the fall of the century-long Sakya hegemony, the institution of a new tradition of kingship, and the reunification of multiple feudal states into a single state under indigenous rule. The move towards political reunification was accompanied by similar trends towards religious institutionalization, which was reflected in the growing influence of sectarian monastic institutions. The fourteenth century was thus characterized by a move towards more centralized secular and political authority and a strong emphasis on legal and monastic codes.

The fourteenth century is also marked by other significant events as well. Politically, by the mid-fourteenth century the Sakya political hegemony over Tibet had drastically weakened. As the Sakya political grip on Tibet became weaker, other smaller political groups, often with strong sectarian identities, challenged their authority and attempted to establish their own political dominance. The eventual demise of the Sakya rule give way to the emergence of a new tradition of kingship established by the charismatic leader T'ai Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen. Jangchup Gyaltsen and his detractors were engaged not only in nearly constant legal and military wrangling. In terms of its impact on Longchenpa and the composition of *The Treasury of Abiding Reality,* his conflict with Gompa Künrin and the Drigungpas was perhaps most significant. In addition, Jangchup Gyaltsen's prolonged exposure to the procedures and protocols of the tribunal (*khrims ra*) may well have had a significant impact on his later fascination with law and legal codes.

Jangchup Gyaltsen was greatly involved in a rhetorical and ideological battle for the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people, and he skillfully used the means at his disposal to further his agenda. These included publicly re-establishing the legal codes and several rites and ceremonies dating from the Dynastic Period as a means to play on the nostalgic sentiments of, and instill confidence in the polity. The nostalgia for the Dynastic Period was not exclusive to Jangchup Gyaltsen and his clan, and the Nyingmapas and Bonpos, among others, also attempted to rhetorically evoke this period and associate their movements with it.

The fourteenth century also saw the rise of the significant institutions of largescale monasteries, scholasticism, and the incarnate lama. After the so-called "dark ages" of Tibetan historic, the reestablishment of the dynastic lineage in western Tibet, the arrival of Atiśa, and the founding of the Kadampa order, initiated a revival of the academic and monastic side of Buddhism. This trend continued until the fourteenth century, by which time all the major schools of Buddhism except the Nyingmapas had established major monastic universities. The rise of sectarian traditions is marked by a focus on their own sense of identity with the concomitant emphasis on their respective monastic bases, scholastic handbooks (*yig cha*) relating to their "own systems" (*rang lugs*), and the refutation of "others' systems" (*gzhan lugs*). Other factors, such as the gradual disappearance of new Buddhist texts, point towards the increasing trend towards rigid sectarian identities during this period.

Related with the new era of Tibetan intellectual history that made possible the creation of scriptural canons was the turn by religious specialists away from ritual studies to academic, scholastic studies, particularly epistemology and logic. The fourteenth century saw the establishment of large-scale monastic institutions where the source of prestige was not knowledge of ritual procedures or techniques as it might have been in the past but where knowledge of scriptures was particularly valorized. This created special tensions for figures such as Longchenpa, who had to accommodate both of these traditions, i.e., that of yogic/ritual specialists and that of scholastics.

In our examination of the biographical materials, we saw a man with a strong sense of family, spiritual, and regional pride. These factors made it easier for Longchenpa to criticize the disturbing negative trends in Tibet of increased militarization, the erosion of religious ethics, and so forth, and his critiques and injunctions all possess the added moral and rhetorical force that goes along with the prestige of his background and stature. Longchenpa's personality,

however, was not merely a result of his close association with important Tibetan historical and religious icons—it was formed as well by the varied experiences of his life. His highly specialized education, in particular, is immediately evident as a profound influence. Among his educational experiences, two stand out as being particularly influential: the seven years he spent at Sangphu Neutok, and the years traveling and practicing with his main teacher Kumārādza.

Another crucial aspect of Longchenpa's life is his tendency to express his experiences, attitudes, and historical observations through works ostensibly concerned with completely unrelated topics such as philosophy, ethics, and so on. In fact, certain works contain so many such references as to be nearly autobiograhpical in character. The image conveyed in many of these works is of a man who feels persecuted and oppressed by social and spiritual inferiors, and who must escape their evil influences both literally and figuratively.

Finally, there is Longchenpa's complex relationship with Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen. Viewed superficially, these two men should have had very few occasions to interact. However, their paths did cross, and with somewhat spectacular results. The tone and content of Longchenpa's expressions of anger and frustration at the degradation of Tibetan religious and secular society may easily be interpreted as being implicit criticisms of the prominent and powerful figures of the day. Longchenpa was particularly aggravated by the military activity and the presence of irreligious people in Central Tibet (particularly at Samye), both of which can be at least indirectly tied to Jangchup Gyaltsen and the Phakmodrupas. Finally, Longchenpa's relationship with Jangchup Gyaltsen's rivals precipitated a conflict between the two men and was the main reason the former fled to Bhutan in the mid-1350s. It was during this last period of intense creative activity in exile that Longchenpa most likely composed *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*, and many of the themes and metaphors he employs in this work seem directly influenced by these events and experiences.

The Treasury of Abiding Reality is a work authored late in his life that explicates the Mind Series (*sems sde*) Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) literature that Longchenpa had mastered decades earlier. It resembles, both in content and style, some of his other famous works on the Seminal Heart. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* was either composed during Longchenpa's period of exile in Bhutan, or shortly after his return to Central Tibet. The late composition date is significant

since it provides insight into how he might have perceived his experiences during his period of political exile.

The Treasury of Abiding Reality draws primarily on the earliest stratum of Great Perfection literature, that of the Mind Series, dating from approximately the tenth century. The Mind Series served as a systematization of earlier traditions and a conservative response to the developing forms of tantric discourse at that time. Stylistically these texts are characterized by their almost absolute denial of all forms of Buddhist meditative practice, especially Mahāyoga forms of tantric praxis. Although the language of these Mind Series (*sems sde*) texts explicitly negates practice in general, and tantric practice in particular, it is clear that it is a development or evolution of tantric discourse, and as such may itself be considered tantric in character.

The Treasury of Abiding Reality is also associated with the Great Perfection's Seminal Heart tradition. This movement chiefly arose between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, and was in a sense a synthesis of the period's various religious movements. Texts in this category represent a departure from the earlier stratum of Mind Series texts inasmuch as they begin to demonstrate an increasing concern with specific forms of tantric praxis. Among the interesting innovations emerging at that time were practices concerned with elaborate body-based visualizations. In addition, the texts of the Seminal Heart tradition incorporate elaborate discussions of cosmogony and cosmology into their synthesis of myth and philosophy. These are striking developments since they represent a reversal of the earlier tendency of Great Perfection discourse to establish its own unique identity through rhetorically distancing itself from other forms of tantra.

Longchenpa's literary corpus is massive and reflects his wide-ranging interests and expertise, but he is particularly noted for his masterly exegeses of the Great Perfection. *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* is one of Longchenpa's famous *Seven Treasuries (mdzod bdun)*, a classic collection of Tibetan literature. These works were and continue to be regarded by scholars of the Ancient School (*rnying ma*) as the definitive works of systematic Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) philosophy. Unlike the earlier *Treasuries*, however, *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* does not dwell on systematic expositions of Buddhist or Great Perfection philosophy, but rather integrates deep understanding of Great Perfection doctrine with lived-through experience in works of synthetic poetry.

Great Perfection literature is greatly concerned with describing direct and immediate experiences of unadorned reality. Paradoxically, however, in order to describe an experience that is by definition ineffable, such literature must resort to the use of paradox and other negative or "apophatic" language which itself disparages language. On the other hand, at times this negative rhetoric of the Great Perfection rhetoric becomes a demonization of dialectical and scholastic discourse, together with scholars and others who abide by artificial, contrived rules and laws. This contentious feature of Great Perfection diction reveals it's a fundamentally parasitic quality—rather than put forward any systematic presentation of either philosophy or spiritual practice, it is often content to deconstruct the seemingly coherent systems of the "lower" vehicles.

As influential and prominent as this negative or "apophatic" rhetoric is, however, it complemented by an equally strong *positive* rhetoric of the indwelling primordial wisdom (*ye shes*) or awareness (*rig pa*). Certain noteworthy tropes, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies peculiar to this body of literature elaborate on these twin themes. For instance, we encounter a general fascination with origins and primordiality. The terms "nature" (*rang bzhin*) and "natural" (*rang gis, ngang gis*, and so forth) also pervade almost all strata of Great Perfection literature, and are often contrasted with terms connoting contrivance, effort, striving, and so on, as does a persistent questioning of the validity of common notions of Buddhist ethics.

Turning to *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* itself, we discover that its underlying structure of the text is comprised of the four tantric commitments (skt. *samaya*, tib. *dam tshig*) of absence (*med pa*), simplicity (*phyal pa*), spontaneity (*lun grub*), and unity (*gcig bu*). Each of these four rubrics are further divided into four categories of "indictment" (*gnad bkrol*, literally "laying bare the key facts"), "arrest" (*'gag bsdams*, literally "confining within the nexus"), "binding into fetters" (*'chings su bcing ba*), and "passing judgment" (*la zla ba*). The second set of four applies to the first group of four such that one is "confined" within "absence," "indicted" within "spontaneity," and so forth. The word "commitment" (*dam tshig*) here is a term commonly found in tantric literature to refer to the esoteric pledges tantric initiates promise to uphold. In this context, however, the pledges or commitments Longchenpa urges the reader to uphold paradoxically require no particular effort to protect—on the contrary, to exert any effort in the observance of these precepts would be to transgress them. He appears to be playing off the strict language of the tantric injunction to guard assiduously one's esoteric commitments by mischievously

juxtaposing these concepts. By using absence and so forth as the very *structure* of the text, Longchenpa engages in a subtle polemic against the contrivance and artificiality of normative tantric rules and practices associated with both the "Modernist" movement (*gsar ma*), and the Mahāyoga system of his own tradition. This sixteen-fold structure also lends itself well to a judicial interpretation, which is particularly evocative in light of his problematic relationship with Jangchup Gyaltsen, one Tibet's leading proponents of legalistic discourse.

In contrast to the sorts of religious and civic laws based on rewards and punishments being articulated in his beloved central Tibet, Longchenpa sought to express an all-embracing metaphysical or "natural" set of guidelines that were essentially positive. Whereas Jangchup Gyaltsen is concerned with establishing highly stratified procedures and laws, Longchenpa focuses on a different non-hierarchical, but equally structured, sixteen-fold theme. Although none of these terms are legal terms *per* se, they distinctly evoke an atmosphere of investigation, apprehension, capture, and judgment, and in fact they do echo the very sorts of concerns and language that was being deployed by Jangchup Gyaltsen in the civic arena. Although we will never know whether or not Longchenpa was even conscious of the legal codes being disseminated by Jangchup Gyaltsen after his ascension to power in 1354, it is nevertheless remarkable that he should employ terms and concepts that so closely mirror the legal structures and vocabulary.

By distilling the essential points made throughout the sustained multifaceted argument with all of its specificity, I hope I have persuaded the reader that the remarkable language and rhetorical strategies found in *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* do in fact reflect a wide array of influences and concerns. Rather than to suggest that the text is incoherent or that it collapses under the sheer weight of its complexity, I have decisively demonstrated that it is a fascinating mosaic that reflects a plethora of influences, and that, far from being a distraction, these complexities enrich the text, and are in any event part and parcel of its overall *gestalt*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TIBETAN SOURCES

REFERENCE WORKS

Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo. (1994). Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Chandra Das, Sarat. (1980). *Tibetan-English Dictionary.* Tokyo: Rinzen Publishing.

Catalogue of Chinese Publications in Tibetan Studies (1949-1991) (krung go'i bod rig pa'i dpe cha'i dkar chag). (1994). Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.

Elementary Knowledge on Creative Writing (rtsom gzhung blo gsal 'jug sgo). (1990). Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe krun khang.

How to Write Practical Writings (rgyun spyod yig rigs gang 'dra byas nas 'bri dgos). (1973) Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe krun khang.

General Knowledge of Letter Writing. (1987). Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe krun khang.

A Synopsis of Clear Expressions (mngon brjod phyogs bsgrigs). (1986). Edited by Lozang Tsering (*bLo-bzang tshe-ring*). Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang.

Tenzin Gyaltsen (*bsTan 'dzin rgyal mtshan*). (1988). *The Golden Key of Clear Expression (mngon brjod gser gyi lde mig).* Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang.

English-Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary. (1988). Edited by Tashi Tsering. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

CANONICAL WORKS

kun tu bzang po klong drug pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 394.1-467.3.

kun byed rgyal po. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 1.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 2.1-192.5.

dkon mchog ta la la'i mdo. (no info).

bkra shis mdzes ldan chen po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 173.3-193.4.

klu'i rgyal po mchod rten gyi rgyud thugs yang dag pa. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 45.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 458.1-725.4.

klu nag po bsad pa'i man ngag. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 45.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 904.1-931.3.

sku gdung 'bar ba chen po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 11.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 788.2-815.7.

khyung chen lding ba. In the gTing skyes edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 1.* Thimbu: Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche, 1973.

khro bo rta mchog rol pa. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 32.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 414.5-609.2.

sgra thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 2.1-173.3.

nges don 'dus pa'i rgyud. . In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 6.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 2.1-145.5.

ngos sprod rin po che spras pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 280.1-304.7.

nyi ma dang zla ba kha sbyor ba chen po gsang ba'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 491.6-559.7.

gtum po chen po ma rungs pa rdo rje khyung dang bcas pa don 'dus pa gsang ba'i rgyud chen po'i don btus pa. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 43.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 277.3-281.3.

lta ba khyung chen lding ba'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 8.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982.

thig le kun gsal chen po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 13.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 296.6-492.5.

drag po ngan sngags kyi rtsa ba'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 44.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 423.6-525.3.

drag po ngan sngags kyi gshad rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 44.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 525.3-584.7.

drag po brtsegs pa dgongs pa lung bstan pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 44.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 347.1-423.6.

rdo rje khyung gi snying po srog gi rtsa ba'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 43.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 27.1-30.6.

rdo rje khyung nag gi rgyud yang snying rtsa ba'i man ngag. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 43.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 256.4-260.2.

rdo rje khyung nag gi rgyud rin po che'i sprul pa. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 43.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 268.3-271.5.

rdo rje khyung nag gsang ba rin po che'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 43.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 243.6-249.3.

rdo rje khyung gtsug lag 'khor lo'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 44*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 254.4-258.2.

rdo rje gtum po gsang ba rin po che khyung nag tu sprul pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 43*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 249.3-256.4.

rdo rje bya khyung gsang ba rin po che 'khros pa sprul pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 43*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 271.5-277.3.

rdo rje gtsug lag 'khor lo gsum pa'i rgyud chen po. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 44*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 124.3-143.4.

rdo rje gtsug lag drag po ngan sngags me long rnam par bkod pa 'khor lo gzer gyi rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 44*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 293.2-298.1.

rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long gi rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 193.4-245.5.

rdo rje gsang ba chen po'i sku rin po che dbyig gi sgron ma shes rab chen po'i mdo. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 7*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 869.6-883.6.

nor bu 'phra bkod rang gi don thams cad gsal bar byed pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 712.6-777.7.

dpal padma dbang chen dregs pa zil gnon gyi rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 31*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982. pp. 245.7-308.1.

dpal zla gsang nag po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 25*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982. pp. 2.1-283.4.

'phags pa rdo rje gtsug lag gi 'khor lo'i rgyud chen po. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 44*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 143.4-224.3.

'phags pa gsang sngags chen po bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i mdo. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 8*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982. pp. 616.3-630.1.

bya khyung glog 'gyu'i las kyi rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 45*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 198.7-268.3.

byang chub kyi sems khyung chen gyi rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 1*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 537-560.

mu tig rin po che 'phreng ba'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12*. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 304.7-393.7.

rdzogs pa chen po sku gsum ye shes lnga'i don bshad pa nyi zla kha sbyor seng ge sgra yi dgongs pa bshad pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 5.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 440.5-596.2.

rdzogs pa rang byung chen po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 11.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 2.1-298.1.

rig pa khu byug gi rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 1.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 499.6-524.6.

rig pa rang grol chen po thams cad 'grel pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 11.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 699.2-757.2.

rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 11.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 323.1-699.1.

rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of The Collected Tantras of the Ancients *(rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 4.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 534.5-548.5.

la zlo gsang ba'i 'khor lo. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 1.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 282.3-284.3.

las rab tu 'byed pa klu'i rgyal po rtog pa'i rgyal po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 45.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 268.3-312.1.

seng ge rtsal dzogs chen po'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 12.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 559.7-712.6.

gsang ba don 'dus phyag na rdo rje khyung dang bcas pa'i rgyud. In the mTshams brag edition of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 43.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 260.2-268.3.

gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa. In the mTshams brag edition of The Collected Tantras of the Ancients (rnying ma rgyud 'bum) Vol. 20. Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan, 1982, pp. 152.6-218.7.

OTHER WORKS IN TIBETAN

Budön *(Bu ston rin chen grub)*. (1971). *bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa'i gsal byed chos kyi 'byung gnas gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod*. Edited by Lokesh Chandra. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture.

Budön *(Bu ston rin chen grub)*. (1988). *Bu ston chos 'byung*. Qinghai: mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Chödrak Zangpo *(Chos grags bzang po)*. (1993). *kun mkhyen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam thar mthong ba don ldan*. In *kun mkhyen klong chen ran 'byams kyi rnam thar*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Dondam Maway Senge (Don dam smra ba'i seng ge). (1969). *A 15th Century Tibetan Compendium of Knowledge (bshad mdzod yid bzhin nor bu)*. Edited by Lokesh Chandra. New Delhi: Published by Dr. Mrs. Sharada Rani.

Dungkar Lozang Trinlay *(Dung-dkar blo-bzang 'phrin-las)*. (1991). *The Merging of Religious and Secular Rule in Tibet*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.

Dungkar Lozang Trinlay *(Dung-dkar blo-bzang 'phrin-las)*. (1982). *How to Engage in Poetry: Introduction to Understanding Verbal Ornamentation (tshig rgyan) (snyan ngag la 'jug tshul tshig rgyan rig pa'i sgo 'byed)*. Qinghai: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Garab Dorje *(dga' rab rdo rje)*. *sku gsum thug phrad.* get information.

Geshe Gendun Rinchen (dge bshes dge 'dun rin chen). (1976). *dpal ldan 'brug pa'i gdul zhing lho phyogs nags mo'i ljongs chos 'byung blo gsar rna ba'i rgyan*. Bhutan.

Go Lotsawa *('Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal)*. (1984). *The Blue Annals (deb ther sngon po)*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Guru Tashi *(Gu ru bkra shis)*. (1990). *bstan pa'i snying po gsang chen 'gyur nges don zab mo'i chos kyi byung gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad mkhas pa dga' byed ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtsho*. Beijing: krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang.

Jikmay Lingpa *('Jigs med gling pa)*. (1975). *Treasury of Enlightened Qualities (yon tan rin po che'i mdzod)*. Thimpu: Kunzang Topkey.

Jikmay Lingpa *('Jigs med gling pa)*. (1985). *The Collected Works of 'Jigs-med-gling-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje 1729-1798, Vol. 3*. Gangtok: Pema Thinley for Dodrupchen Rinpoche.

Jikmay Tenpay Nyima. (*'jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma*). (1974). *The Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of Rdo-grub-chen 'Jigs-med-bstan pa'i-nyi-ma* Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche.

Kozhul Drakpa Jungnay *(Ko zhul grags pa 'byung gnas)* and Gyelwa Lozang Kaydrup *(rGyal ba blo bzang mkhas grub)*. (1992). *gangs can mkhas grub rim byon ming mdzod*. Gansu: Kan su'i mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Kunzang Gyurme Chokdrup *(Kun bzang 'gyur med mchog grub)*. (1984). *kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po gter chen dri med 'od zer gyi rnam par thar pa cung zad spros pa ngo mtshar skal bzang mchog gi dga' ston*. Delhi: Ngawang Chodron.

Lakla Chödrup *(gLag bla bsod nams chos 'grub)*. (1993). *kun mkhyen klong chen rabs 'byams kyi rnam thar dad pa gsum gyi 'jugs ngogs*. In *kun mkhyen klong chen rabs 'byams kyi rnam thar*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Longchenpa *(klong chen pa)*. (1973). *tshigs su bcad pa'i bstan bcos me tog gi rgyan*. In *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 2*. Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1973). *sems dang ye shes kyi dris lan*. In *Miscellaneous Writings of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Volume 1*. Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1973). *ri bong gi rtogs brjod pa legs par 'doms pa lha'i rnga bo che lta bu'i gtam*. In *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 1*. Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1973). *po ta la kun tu dga' ba'i gtam*. In *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 1*. Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1973). *nags tshal kun tu dga' ba'i gtam*. In *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 1*. Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1973). *ngang pa'i dris lan sprin kyi snying po*. In *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 1*. Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1973). *bum thang lha'i sbas yul gyi bkod pa la bsngangs pa me tog skyed tshal*. In *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 1*. Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1973). *rkyen la khams 'dus pa ka kha sum cu.* In *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 1.* Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa, (1973). *dri med 'od zer gyi gsung thor bu'i bzhugs byang rin po che'i sne ma.* In *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, Vol. 1.* Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1973). *ngal gso skor gsum.* Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche.

Longchenpa *(klong chen pa).* (1974). *Miscellaneous Writings (gsung thor bu) 2 Vols.* Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Longchenpa. (1975). *khyung chen gshog rdzogs.* In *snying thig ya bzhi/zab mo yang thig, Vol. 10.* Delhi: Sherab Gyaltsen Lama.

Longchenpa. (1982). *Catalogue of Treatises: A Precious Treasure House.* In *Collected Miscellaneous Writings (gsuṅ thor bu) of Rgyal-ba Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa Vol. 1.* Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrub and Sherab Drimey.

Longchenpa. (1983). *The Treasury of Words and Meanings (tshig don rin po che'i mdzod).* Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen and Khentse Labrang.

Longchenpa. (1983). *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse (chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod).* Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen and Khentse Labrang.

Longchenpa. (1983). *The Treasury of Abiding Reality (gnas lugs rin po che'i mdzod).* Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen and Khentse Labrang.

Mipam Jamyang Gyatso *(mi pham 'jam dbyangs rgya mtsho).* (n.d.). *yid bzhin mdzod kyi sa bcad bsdus don ku ma da'i phreng ba.* Gangtok: Dodrup Chen.

Mipam Jamyang Gyatso *(mi pham 'jam dbyangs rgya mtsho).* (n.d.). *yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod kyi dka' gnad ci rigs gsal bar byed pa.* Gangtok: Dodrup Chen.

Nub Sangyay Yeshe (*nub sangs rgyas ye shes*). (1974). *bsam gtan mig sgron.* Leh, Ladakh: S.W. Tashigangpa.

Padma Lingpa (*Pad ma gling pa*). (1976). *Bum thang gter ston padma gling pa'i rnam thar 'od zer kun mdzes nor bu'i phreng ba.* In *The Rediscovered Teachings of the Great Padma gLing pa Vol. 14.* Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgay.

Padma Ledreltsel *(Pad ma las 'brel rtsal)* (a.k.a. Longchenpa). (1971). *mthong snang rin po che 'od kyi drva ba.* In *snying thig ya bzhi Vol. 9.* Delhi: Sherab Gyaltsen Lama.

Padma Tsewang (*Pad ma tshe dbang*). (1991). *pad gling lo rgyus drang gtam.* Thimpu: National Library of Bhutan.

Phuntsok Tsering *(Phun tshogs tse ring),* ed., (1987). *Deb ther kun gsal me long.* Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang.

Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo *(rong zom chos kyi bzang po).* (1974). *theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa.* In *Commentaries on the Guhyagarbha Tantra and other Rare Nyingma Texts from the Library of Dudjom Rinpoche, Vol. 1.* New Delhi: Sanje Dorje.

Sakya Paṇḍita *(Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan).* (1968). *Treasury of Words (tshig gi gter).* In *The Complete Collected Works of the Great Masters of the Sa skya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, vol. 5: The Complete Works of Paṇḍita Kun dga' Rgyal mtshan.* Tokyo: Toyo Bunkyo.

Sakya Paṇḍita *(Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan).* (1981). *Introduction to Scholarship (mkhas pa 'jug pa'i sgo). Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.*

Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (*shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan*). (1972). *dbyings rig rin po che'i mdzod.* Dolanji: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre.

Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (*shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan*). (1972). *lung rigs rin po che'i mdzod.* Dolanji: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre.

Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan). (1972-3). *sde snod rin po che'i mdzod.* Dolanji: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre.

Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (*shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan*). (1973-4). *nam mka' mdzod.* Dolanji: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre.

Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (*shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan*). (1977). *legs bshad rin po che'i mdzod.* Dolanji: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre.

Śrī Siṃha. (1971). *khyung chen mkha' lding.* In *Snying thig ya bzhi of Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer Vol. 8 (bi ma snying thig part 2).* New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi.

Śrī Siṃha. *kha gtam gsang ba'i snyan rgyud.*

Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen *(ta'i si tu byang chub rgyal mtshan).* (1989). *rlangs po ti bse ru.* Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang.

Ta'i Situ Jangchup Gyaltsen *(ta'i si tu byang chub rgyal mtshan).* (1989). *ta si byang chub rgyal mtshan gyi bka' chems mthong ba don ldon.* Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang.

Tsering Dekyi (*tse ring bde skyid*). (1987). *bod kyi dus rabs rims byung gi khrims yig phyogs bsdus dvangs byed ke ta ka.* Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang.

Tsongkapa (*Tsong kha pa bLo bzang grags pa*). (n.d.). *rje thams chad mkhyen pa chen po'i bka' 'bum thor bu.* Dharamsala: Cultural Printing Press.

Urgyan Lingpa (*U rgyan gling pa*). (n.d.). *Padma bka' thang.* Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Zhabkar Tsokdruk Rangdröl *(Zhabs dkar tshogs drug rang grol).* (1985). *'Od gsal Rdzogs pa chen po'i khregs chod lta ba'i glu dbyadns sa lam ma lus myur du bgrod pa'i rtsal ldan mkha' ldidn gsog rlabs.* Sonada, Darjeeling: Rangrig and Konchhog Lhadrepa.

WESTERN SOURCES

Ahmad, Z., trans. (1995). *A History of Tibet.* Bloomington: Iniana University Press.

Arènes, Pierre. (1998). "Herméneutique des tantra: étude de quelques usages du 'sens caché'." In Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies 21:2.

Aris, Michael. (1979). *Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom.* Warminster, UK: Aris and Phillips.

Aris, Michael. (1988). *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives: A Study of Pemalingpa (1450-1521) and the Sixth Dalai Lama (1683-1706).* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Aristotle. (1992). *The Art of Rhetoric.* Translated by Hugh Lawson-Tancred. New York: Penguin.

Augustine. (1989). *On Christian Doctrine.* Translated by D.W. Robertson. New York: MacMillan.

Barron, Richard, trans. (1998). *The Precious Treasury of the Way of Abiding.* Junction City CA: Padma Publishing.

Barthes, Roland. (1977). "The Death of the Author." In *Image, Music, Text.* Translated by Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang.

Bender, John and David E. Wellberry. eds. (1990). *The Ends of Rhetoric: History, Theory, Practice.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bloom, Harold. (1997). *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Broido, Michael. (1988). "Killing, Lying, Stealing, and Adultery: A Problem of Interpretation in the Tantras." In *Buddhist Hermeneutics.* Edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr . Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Burke, Kenneth. (1970). *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cameron, Averil. (1991). *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Collins, Steven. (1998). *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire.* Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.

Coward, Harold, ed. (1990). *Derrida and Indian Philosophy.* Albany: State University of New York.

Cuevas, Bryan J. (2000). "The hidden treasures of Sgam-po-gdar Mountain: a history of the Zhi-kbro revelations of Karma-gling-pa and the making of the Tibetan Book of the Dead." Doctoral Dissertation. Charlottesville: University of Virginia.

Dargyay, Eva M. (1979). *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Davidson, Ronald. (1991). "Reflections on the Mahesvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa-skya-pa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka." In *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies 14:2.*

de Jong, J.W. (1984). "A New History of Tantric Literature in India." In *Acta Indologica 6.* Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji.

de Man, Paul. (1979). Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust. New Haven: Yale University Press,.

de Man, Paul. (1986). Resistance to Theory: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, Jacques. (1976) *On Grammatology.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Dreyfus, Georges. (1994) "Proto-Nationalism in Tibet." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies.* Edited by Per Kvaerne. Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994.

Dreyfus, Georges. (1996). *Knowledge and Reality.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Dudjom Rinpoche (*'jigs bral ye shes bdud 'joms rin po che*). (1991). *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism (2 Vols.).* Translated and Edited by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein. London: Wisdom Publications.

Dupriez, Bernard. (1991). *A Dictionary of Literary Devices: Gradus, A-Z.* Translated by Albert W. Halsall. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Eppling, John F. (1989). "A Calculus of Creative Expression: The Central Chapter of Daṇḍin's Kāvyādarśa." Ph.D. Dissertation. Madison: University of Wisconsin.

Eden, Kathy. (1997). *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and Its Humanist Reception*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. (1990). *Flügelschläge des Garuda : literar- und ideengeschichtliche Bemerkungen zu einer Liedersammlung des Rdzogs-chen*. Stuttgart : F. Steiner Verlag.

Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. (1997). "Recently Discovered Manuscripts of the rNying ma rGyud 'bum from Nepal." In *Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995. Edited by* Ernst Steinkellner. (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Faure, Bernard. (1991). *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fish, Stanley. (1971). *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fish, Stanley. "Rhetoric." (1989). In *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Fish, Stanley. (1991). "Biography and Intention." In *Contesting the Subject: Essays in the Postmodern Theory and Practice of Biography and Biographical Criticism.* Edited by William Epstein. West Lafayette IN: Purdue University Press.

Flood, Gavin. (1996). *An Introduction to Hinduism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foucault, Michel. (1965). *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason.* Richard Howard, trans. New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, Michel. (1973). *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences.* New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, Michel. (1984). "What Is an Author?" In *The Foucault Reader.* Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books.

Fox, Douglas, trans. (1985). *The Heart of Buddhist Wisdom: A Translation of the Heart Sutra With Historical Introduction and Commentary.* Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

Franz, Michael. (1982). *Rule by Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and its Role in Society and State.* Boulder CO: Westview Press.

French, Rebecca. (1995). *The Golden Yoke: The Legal Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Freud, Sigmund. (1955). *The Interpretation of Dreams.* Translated and edited by James Strachy. New York: Basic Books.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. (1990). *Truth and Method (2nd Revised Edition).* New York: Crossroad Publishing.

Germano, David. (1994). "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*)." in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.* 17:2.

Germano, David, trans. (1994). *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings.* (Unpublished translation).

Germano, David. (1997). The Secret Transformation of Buddhist Tantra in Tibet. (Unpublished manuscript).

Germano, David and Janet B. Gyatso, (Forthcoming). "Longchenpa and the Possession of the Ḍākiṇis." In *Tantric Religions in Practice*. Edited by David G. White. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Germano David F. (Forthcoming). *Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, Ḍākinīs and Saints in Tibet*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gerow, Edwin. (1974). "Poetics of Stanzaic Poetry." In *The Literatures of India: An Introduction*. Edited by Edward C. Dimock, et al. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gimello, Robert. (1976). "Apophatic and Kataphatic Discourse in Mahayana: A Chinese View." In *Philosophy East and West* 26:2.

Goodman, Steven D. and Ronald M. Davidson, eds. (1992). *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Guenther, Herbert, trans. (1976). *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* (3 volumes). Berkeley: Dharma Publishing.

Guenther, Herbert. (1983). *The Dynamics of Being: rDzogs-chen Process Thinking*. Alberta: Society for Tibetan Studies.

Guenther, Herbert, trans. (1983). *Looking Deeper: A Swan's Questions and Answers*. Porthill ID: Timeless Books.

Guenther, Herbert, trans. (1989). *A Visionary Journey*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.

Guenther, Herbert. (1989). *From Reductionism to Creativity: rDzogs-chen and the New Sciences of Mind*. Boston: Shambhala.

Guenther, Herbert, trans. (1996). *The Full-Fledged Khyung-chen Bird: An Essay in Freedom as the Dynamics of Being*. Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies.

Gyatso, Janet B. (1996). "Drawn from the Tibetan Treasury: The gTer ma Literature." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Edited by José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Press.

Gyatso, Janet B. (1997). *Apparitions of Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hiley, David R., James F. Bohman, and Richard Shusterman, eds. (1991). *The Interpretive Turn: Philosophy, Science, Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hopkins, Jeffrey. (1989). *Tantra in Tibet*. Ithaca:Snow Lion Publications.

Huntington, C.W., Jr. (1989). *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Mādhyamika*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Jackson, David P. (1984). *The Mollas of Mustang: Historical, Religious and Oratorical Traditions of the Nepalese-Tibetan Borderland*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

Jackson, David P. (1987). *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III) Vol. 1*. Wein: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistiche Studien Universität Wein.

Jackson, David P. (1992). "Birds in the Egg and Newborn Lion Cubs: Metaphors for the Potentialities and Limitations of "All-at-once" Enlightenment." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies Vol. 1*. Narita: Naritan Institute for Buddhist Studies.

Jackson, David P. (1996). "The bsTan rim ("Stages of the Doctrine") and Similar Graded Expositions of the Bodhisattva Path." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Edited by José Cabézón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.

Jackson, Roger. (1985). "Sa skya Paṇḍita's Account of the bSam yas debate: History as Polemic." in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies 5:2*.

Jost, Walter and Michael Hyde. (1997). *Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Our Time: A Reader*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kapstein, Matthew. (2000). *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kapstein, Matthew. (2000). "The Indian Literary Identity in Tibet" In *Literary Cultures in History*. Edited by Sheldon Pollack. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Karmay, Samten G., trans. *The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon*. London: Oxford University Press.

Karmay, Samten. (1980). "The Ordinance of Lha Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od." In *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson: Proceedings of the IATS, Oxford 1979*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1980.

Karmay, Samten. (1988). *The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching in Tibetan Buddhism*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Karmay, Samten. (1998). "The Doctrinal Position of rDzogs chen from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Centuries." In *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Ritual and Beliefs in Tibet*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point.

Kennedy, George A. (1994). *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kennedy, George A. (1998). *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kuhn, Thomas. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions 2nd Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kuijp, Leonard W. J. van der. (1983). *Contributions to the Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology: From the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century*. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner Verlag.

Kuijp, Leonard W. J. van der. (1991). "On the Life and Political Career of Ta'i-Si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302-?1364)." In *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Géza on his Seventieth Birthday*. Vienna: Arbeitkreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.

Kuijp, Leonard W. J. van der. (1994). "Fourteenth Century Cultural History 1: Ta'i-si-tu Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan as a Man of Religion." In *Indo-Iranian Journal* (Vol. 37, No. 2, April 1994).

Kuijp, Leonard W. J. van der. (1996). "Tibetan Belles-Lettres." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Edited by José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Press.

Kvaerne, Per. (1974). "The Canon of the Tibetan Bonpos." In *Indo-Iranian Journal 16: 18-56.*

Kvaerne, Per. (1996). "The Literature of Bon." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Edited by José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Press.

Kwanten, Luc. (1972). "Tibetan-Mongol Relations During the Yuan Dynasty, 1207-1368." Doctoral Dissertation. Columbia: University of South Carolina.

Lanham, Richard A. (1991). *A Handlist of Rhetorical terms: Second Edition*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lhalungpa, Lobsang, trans. (1979). *The Life of Milarepa*. New York: Dutton.

Lopez, Donald S. Jr., ed. (1988). *Buddhist Hermeneutics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Lopez, Donald S. Jr. (1996). "Polemical Literature (dgag lan)." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Edited by José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Press.

Le Goff, Jacques. (1988). *The Medieval Imagination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lyotard, Jean-François. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition*. Translated by Bennington and Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Magliola, Robert R. (1984). *Derrida on the Mend*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press.

Magliola, Robert R. (1997). *On Deconstructing Life-Worlds: Buddhism, Christianity, Culture*. Atlanta: Scholar's Press.

Mayer, Robert. (1996). *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis*. Oxford: Kiscadale Publications.

Monier-Williams, Monier. (1951). *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Neumaier-Dargyay, E.K. (1992). *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind: The Motherly Buddha*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Newland, Guy. (1996). "Debate Manuals (yig cha) in dGe lugs Monastic Colleges." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Edited by José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Press.

Onoda, Shunzo. (1996). "bsDus grwa Literature." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Edited by José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Press.

Orr, Leonard. (1991). *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Ortner, Sherry B. (1989). *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Petech, Luciano. (1983). "Tibetan Relations with Sung China and with the Mongols." In *China Among Equals*. Edited by Morris Rossabi. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Petech, Luciano. (1990). *Central Tibet and the Mongols: The Yüan-Sa-skya Period of Tibetan History*. Roma: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

Pommeret, Françoise. (1997). "The Birth of a Nation." In *Bhutan: Moutain Fortress of the Gods*. Edited by Christian Schicklgruber and Françoise Pommeret. London: Serindia Publications.

Quinn, Arthur. (1993). *Figures of Speech: 60 Ways to Turn a Phrase*. Davis: Hermagoras Press.

Richardson, Hugh. (1998). "Who was Yum-brtan." In *High Peaks, Pure Earth: Collected Writings on Tibetan History and Culture*. London: Serindia Publications.

Richardson, Hugh. (1998). "The Succession to Glang-dar-ma." In *High Peaks, Pure Earth: Collected Writings on Tibetan History and Culture*. London: Serindia Publications.

Ricouer, Paul. (1996). "Between Rhetoric and Poetics." In *Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric*. Edited by A.O. Rorty. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. (1997). "Rhetoric—Poetics—Hermeneutics." In *Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Our Time: A Reader*. Edited by Walter Jost and Michael J. Hyde. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Robinson, Richard. (1965). *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Roerich, George, trans. (1976). *The Blue Annals*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Rogers, Katherine M. (1992). "A Tibetan Manual of Logic: An Introduction to Reasoning in the Ge-luk-ba Monastic Educational System." Ph.D. Dissertation. Charlottesville: University of Virginia.

Rorty, Amélie Oksenberg. (1996). "Structuring Rhetoric." In *Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric*.Edited by A. O. Rorty. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rorty, Richard, ed. (1967). *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rorty, Richard. (1967). "Introduction: Metaphilosophical Difficulties of Linguistic Philosophy." In *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*. Chigago: University of Chicago Press.

Rorty, Richard. (1979). *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ruegg, David S, ed. and trans. (1966). *The Life of Bu ston Rinpoche with the Tibetan Text of the Bu ston Rnam thar*. Roma: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

Ruegg, David S. (1992). *Buddha-nature, Mind, and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective: On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet*. New Delhi: Heritage Publishers in arrangement with School of Oriental and African Studies: London.

Samuel, Geoffrey. (1993). *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Scharf, Robert H. (1995). "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience." In *Numen* 42:3, pp. 228-283.

Schicklgruber, Christian and Françoise Pommeret. (1997). *Bhutan: Moutain Fortress of the Gods*. London: Serindia Publications.

Schliermacher, Friedrich D. E. (1989). "General Hermeneutics." In *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*. Edited by Kurt Mueller-Vollmer . New York: Continuum.

Schliermacher, Friedrich D. E. (1989). "Grammatical and Technical Interpretation In *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*. Edited by Kurt Mueller-Vollmer . New York: Continuum.

Sells, Michael. (1994). *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Shakabpa, W.D. (1967). *Tibet: A Political History*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Sherburne, Richard, trans. (2000). *The Complete Works of Atiśa /ri Dipamkāra Jñāna Jo-bo-rje*. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.

Simmons, Herbert W. (1990). *The Rhetorical Turn: Invention and Persuasion in the Conduct of Inquiry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, Warren W. (1996). *Tibetan Nation: A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Snellgrove, David and Hugh Richardson. (1986). *A Cultural History of Tibet.* Boston: Shambhala Publications.

Snellgrove, David. (1987). *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors.* Boston: Shambhala Publications.

Sørensen, Per. (Translator). (1994). *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: Tibetan Buddhist Historiography: An Annotated Translation of the XIVth Century Tibetan Chronicle: rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long.* Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag.

Sperling, Eliot. (1987). "Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa." In *Silver on Lapis: Tibetan Literary Culture and History.*Edited by Christopher Beckwith. Bloomington: The Tibet Society.

Steinkellner, Ernst. (1978). "Remarks on Tantristic Hermeneuics." In *Proceedings of the 1976 Csoma de Körös Symposium.* Edited by L. Ligeti. Biblioteca Orientalia Hungarica (23) Budapest.

Stearns, Cyrus. (1999). *The Buddha from Dolpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen.* Albany: SUNY Press.

Thurman, Robert. (Trans.). (1982). *The Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa.* Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

Thurman, Robert A.F., trans. (1984). *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence: Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Thurman, Robert A.F. (1988). "Vajra Hermeneutics." In *Buddhist Hermeneutics.* Edited by Donald Lopez Jr. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Tucci, Guiseppe. (1949). *Tibetan Painted Scrolls.* Roma: La Liberia dello Stato.

Tucci, Giuseppe. (1988). *The Religions of Tibet.* Translated by Geoffrey Samuels. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Tulku Thondup. (1986). *Hidden Teachings of Tibet: An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism.* Boston: Wisdom.

Tulku Thondup. (1989). *Buddha Mind: An Anthology of Longchen Rabjam's Writings on Dzogpa Chenpo.* Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.

Uray, Geza. (1972). "The Narrative of Legislation and Organization of the mKhas-pa'i dGa-ston: The Origins of the Traditions Concerning Sroṅ-brcan sgam-po as the First Legislator and Organizer of Tibet." In *Acta Oreientalia Scientiarum Hungaricae XXVI: 1.*

Vitali, Roberto. (1996). *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang According to mNga'.ris rgyal.rabs and Gu.ge mkhan.chen Ngag.dbang grags.pa.* Dharamsala: Tho.ling gtsug.lag.khang lo.gcig. stong 'khor.ba'i rjes.dran.mdzad sgo'i go.sgrig tshogs.chung.

Walker, Cheryl. (1991). "Persona Criticism and the Death of the Author." In *Contesting the Subject: Essays in the Postmodern Theory and Practice of Biography and Biographical Criticism.* Edited by William Epstein. West Lafayette IN: Purdue University Press.

Weinberg, Bernard. (1973). "Rhetoric After Plato." In *Dictionary of the History of Ideas Vol. 3.* New York: Charles Scribner.

Wilson, Joe B. (1996). "Tibetan Commentaries on Indian Śāstras." In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Edited by José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Press.

Wylie, Turrell V. "Mar.pa's Tower: Notes on Local Hegemons in Tibet." In *History of Religions (Vol. 3, 1963)*: 278-291.

Wylie, Turrell V. (1977). "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.

The Rhetoric of Naturalness: A Critical Study of the *gNas lugs mdzod*

(PART 2: TRANSLATION)

Gregory Alexander Hillis
Palo Alto, California

B.A., University of California, Santa Cruz, 1979
M.A, University of Virginia, 1993

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religious Studies

University of Virginia
January, 2003

COMMENTARY ON "THE TREASURY OF THE PRECIOUS ABIDING REALITY": A MEANING-COMMENTARY ON THE QUINTESSENCE OF THE THREE SERIES

[24]

In Sanskrit: Tathātva-ratna-koṣa-nāma-vṛtti.[1]

In Tibetan: Commentary on "The Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality."[2]

I prostrate to the glorious All Good

To the openness in which all the spontaneous enlightened qualities are
primordially and perfectly complete,
To the Primordial Savior who has become the glory of saṁsāra and nirvāṇa,
To the Victor, the Dharma-lord who embodies awareness, the Lama,
I bow down with the unfolding thousand-petalled lotus of a hundred-fold faith.[3]

From the vast secret[4] precepts of the seminal heart-essence which concerns the
immediacy of experience,
The highest peak of the vehicles,
I will illuminate the concentrated inner essence, the ultimate definitive meaning,
The Commentary to the Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality.

When the glorious All Good, having enlightened all phenomena into the primordial ground, dwells in the indestructible expanse in the manner of great equality, he turns the unsurpassed Dharma-wheel of definitive meaning. The supreme fruit of these turnings of the wheel is the great secret in which awareness, the enlightening mind, the Reality-gestalt, the suchness beyond affirmation and negation, transformation or change, is taught in direct immediacy as transcending causal networks driven by striving and accomplishment. [25] This treatise entitled *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* summarizes the definitive and ultimate topics of that [secret].

Here [i.e., in this commentary], I will illuminate the topics of just that.

THE HOMAGE

For the moment, I will just start with the homage.

**To the ground for the manifest enlightening process which is
primordially expanding and dissipating,**

To the expanse of the immutable spontaneous adamantine intensity,

To the great natural perfection of mind-as-such,

Without rejection or acceptance, coming or going, I pay homage.[5]

This verse itself delineates the indestructible structure of this treatise, and describes the prostration to the real essence, the self-emergent primordial wisdom, which is the dissipating and expanding of the ground's spontaneity, which is the unchanging expanse of reality, the naturally radiant light—mind itself—to my own inherent condition of great completeness in the manner of not moving from one's own bed—i.e., reality itself—that is free from rejection and acceptance, projection and contraction.

The Great Perfection, which is the self-emergent primordial wisdom, transcends all partiality and prejudice and transcends all affirmation and negation, striving and accomplishment. In *The Tantra of the Great Self-Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud)* it states:

O marvelous transcendent Great Perfection!
It lapses into no position whatsoever; rather
It behaves in a way consonant with self-emergent primordial wisdom.
For example, just as the lion
Overcomes the other beasts of prey with his claws,
So too the Great Perfection speaks for itself and overcomes the Lesser Vehicles.
The Great Perfection, having spoken its own message, places you in your own reality.
In the sphere of the Great Perfection there are neither Buddhas nor sentient beings.
Within the ground of the Great Perfection there is neither good nor bad.
On the path of the Great Perfection there is neither near nor far.
The fruit of the Great Perfection is devoid of something to be attained or not attained.
The gestalt of the Great Perfection has neither being nor non-being.
The speech of the Great Perfection has neither translation nor non-translation.
The mind of the Great Perfection has neither materiality nor differentiations.
The expanse of the Great Perfection can neither be consumed nor eradicated.
In the place of the Great Perfection there is neither high nor low.

The doctrine of the Great Perfection cannot be implemented nor non-implemented.
The dynamism/talent (*rtsal*) of the Great Perfection can neither be perfected nor non-perfected. [26]
The play of the Great Perfection involves neither manifestation nor non-manifestation.
There is neither meditation nor non-meditation on the meaning of the Great Perfection.
The awareness of the Great Perfection is neither high nor not high.
The primordial wisdom of the Great Perfection frolics in terms of all the great secrets.
The limits of the Great Perfection cannot be indicated by saying, "this."
The meaning of the Great Perfection has neither words nor letters.
The royal view of the Great Perfection abides in this manner.
Devoid of words and letters, the inner meaning of the Great Perfection is experienced.
Devoid of oscillating radiance and of the flow of grasping distorted conceptuality, it self-presences with an easy force.[6]
Remaining thus in this dimension of the Great Perfection is what is meant by absence.[7]

The first three lines of the root text indicate an introduction to the self-emergent essence of the depth character, and the fourth indicates the way one is to familiarize oneself with that state. As for the fruit of this meditative attunement, it is taught as the own-bed of the depth character [of the ground], and so that fruit is taught from the perspective of the original ground, and is nothing other than a mere differentiation/opening up that takes place by way of the attainment.[8] Therefore, all phenomena are taught as being completely present/perfect (*rdzogs par*) within the enlightening mind of awareness.[9] As for that, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

Within this [i.e., the enlightening mind], there is nothing that is not complete.
Because there is this completeness as one, as two, and as everything,
All activity is this optimal easy bliss within its sublime constellation.[10]

Perfect completeness in and as one is perfectly complete in and as the enlightening mind.

Perfect completeness in and as two is perfectly complete in and as that which is created by the mind.

Perfect completeness in and as the whole is perfectly complete in and as the sublime constellation [of the three gestalts].

By means of this teaching of the perfect completeness in and as one [i.e., the enlightening mind],

It remains within the deep intention of the Buddha.

By means of this meaning of the perfect completeness in and as the whole,

Everything serves as the sublime constellation.

Whosoever abides within this absence of activity,

Whether the person be god or human, this body

Is the expansive awakening of reality in its dynamic wisdom.

Having accomplished the aims of sentient beings with this [body],

Rest comfortably without resorting to striving or achievement.

Mind-as-such, self-emergent primordial wisdom which serves as the ground from which saṁsāra and nirvāṇa emanate outwards are indicated as objects of homage. Just as it is said in *The Treasury of Spiritual Songs (do ha mdzod):*

I prostrate to the solitary mind-as-such, the seed potency of all

Where fictive existence and transcendent reality emanate outwards,

To this mind which is like a wish-fulfilling gem

That bestows the desired fruit.

THE PROMISE TO COMPOSE THE TEXT

The openness (*klong*) of the inexpressible nature of phenomena,

The highest pinnacle of the view, the Great Perfection, [27]

Is not like anything else and is a teaching beyond all others.

Since I will explain in accordance with how I have realized, you should listen!

With regard to that, reality, i.e., the openness that transcends thought and expression, is awareness' greatly perfected enlightening mind. Since this openness is devoid of things and differentiations (*mtshan ma*), it is even beyond analogy, I accept the promise that "For the sake of later generations, I will teach the meaning well realized through the grace of the holy Guru." Thus, since I here point out the mind-as-such, transcendent of causal networks driven by striving and accomplishment, which is not realized by the lower spiritual vehicles, I teach that you are pure without abandoning or remaining within any deviation and/or obscuration, and that all phenomena are to be realized as mere arbitrary designations (*ming tsam*). As for that it is stated in *Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug phrad)* composed by the great master dGa' rab rDo rje, that:

> The great openness free from activity and devoid of the extremes of production and disintegration and
> The undifferentiated openness, which is just like a golden island,
> Lack both interior and exterior, and hence manifestation or vanishing are absent.
> The enlightening mind is the root for eliminating the darkness of the extremes.
> Although one does not abandon the four extremes that relate to the enlightening mind,
> Untouched by the four extremes, the pitfalls are automatically eradicated.
> Although within the enlightening mind itself, which is devoid of the existential abyss [of nothingness],
> The three spiritual gestalts in which there is no striving are spontaneously perfected,
> You will realize[11] that saṁsāra and nirvāṇa that are mere names are [appearing as if they are] different cause and effect.[12]

Through beginning the subject with words that teach these topics, I was thinking of the benefit whereby those persons with the greatest acumen would become liberated in just this way. Just as I vowed above, without wavering at all, I will teach these subjects for the purpose of bringing this composition to its culmination. Just as it is said in *The Great Commentary on the Eight Thousand (brgyad stong 'grel chen):*

> Those who care about other peoples' spiritual welfare, even at the risk of their lives,

Do not relax in terms of their natural capacities.
These sacred beings never shirk their responsibility for bearing the burden [of beings],
Even in adverse circumstances.

With this text, I will teach the commentary on the underlying intention of the Great Perfection in terms of the [standard] four branches of the text. The enlightening mind of awareness beyond thought and expression, cause and effect, is the subject matter (*brjod bya*) of this treatise. The realization in that way by those of greatest [spiritual] acumen by way of the teaching of just that [subject matter] is the rationale (*dgos pa*) for the text. By taking this into one's own experience according to that realization, [28] one arrives at that which is the ground's character; this is the underlying rationale (*dgos pa'i dgos pa*) for the text—i.e., the secondary purpose (*nying dgos*). The mutual dependence of these is the relationship (*'brel pa*).

Therefore, everything shines forth in the sphere of awareness and, since you realize that awareness transcends the causal networks of activity and exertion, [the Great Perfection] is superior to all the lower vehicles. It is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

I am the all-creating sovereign, the enlightening mind.
You should realize this nature which is me and
You should teach the precepts that all phenomena, howsoever they appear,
Are nothing other than me.
When you have taught these precepts of mine,
All the assemblies of retinues who are gathered around you,
Having realized the nature which is me, supreme and universal ordering,
Are all transformed in and as just this nature of mine.
And, when they all have been transformed in and as this nature of mine,
With respect to all phenomena, howsoever they appear,
They all do not abandon [such phenomena] and they do not refute them, nor do they train in the two truths;
They do not bless in accordance with the three purificatory rites of Kriya Yoga;
They do not stress themselves out striving to accomplish depth contemplation and generation of the enlightening altruistic mind-set.

Since everything has already been created within the sphere of universal
creativity,
Everything is the same as me—universal creativity.
I, who am sameness itself, do not need to create sameness.
I have previously taught on the absence of the need to create sameness.

As for the underlying rationale for the text that is the realization in this way, the following is stated in that same text, i.e., *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

The discussion of the reason for the particular purpose (*dgos ched*)[13]
Is the teaching of such a particular purpose in which
Those Ati-yogins who are endowed with good fortune and the karma
Developed during previous immeasurable eons
For having faith in me, the all accomplishing pure and total presence,
See that there is no such thing as either view or meditation, nor are commitments to
be protected;
That enlightened activities are not things towards which to strive, nor is the path
something along which one proceeds;
That the spiritual levels are not things to be trained in, and that there is no cause
and effect;
That there is no twofold division between conventional and ultimate truths;
That there is nothing to be cultivated or achieved and
They see that neither altruistic aspirations nor antidotes exist;
In other words, they see the nature of mind, that is, universal creativity.

The teaching of the first part of the text has discussed the impetus for engaging in the composition of the treatise.

EXTENSIVE EXPLANATION OF THE MAIN BODY OF THE TREATISE

BRIEF INDICATION OF THE MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT WITH THE FOUR INDESTRUCTIBLE RUBRICS. [29]

> **The final meaning of the essence of the mind, space, and esoteric precepts series resides in the four,**
> **Absence, simplicity, spontaneity, and solitariness,**
> **Each of which has four: indictment, confinement, binding,**
> **And passing judgment.**[14]

With respect to that, the teaching that condenses all phenomena into the enumeration of four great commitments, i.e., the final meaning of the natural Great Perfection, has four parts. To expand upon that, there are the four consisting of the following: (1) There is an absence (*med pa*) of an abiding nature of all phenomena; (2) All phenomena are primordially and spontaneously present (*lhun gyis grub*); (3) Since all phenomena are neither fragmented nor polarized, they are uniform/simplicity (*phyal ba*); and (4) All phenomena are collected into the sphere of the solitary (*gcig pu*) self-emergent primordial wisdom. It is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):*

> At that time, the commitments which transcend the limitations of protection
> Become catalysts for that [visionary yogi] by way of
> The great spontaneity,
> Absence, solitariness, and simplicity.[15]

Also, it is stated in The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (*thig le kun gsal*):

> My secret commitments, which do not require maintenance,
> Are endowed with non-degeneration, primordial protection, and certainty.
> Since the primordial gnosis of inherent intelligence
> Lacks both an object to be protected and a means of protection,
> It is devoid of both degeneration and non-degeneration.
> Since I do not maintain all the verbal categories[16] contrived by the eight lower vehicles,
> We speak of so-called "absence."
> Because there is freedom from the commitments of the lower vehicles and
> Since one's three gateways are vast and expansive,
> We speak of so-called "simplicity."

> Without even the possibility of transgression, the means for sustaining
> The vows that do not need to be sustained
> Is the primordial wisdom of inherent intelligence that is the one and only,
> And hence we speak of so-called "unity."
> The one and only primordial wisdom of inherent intelligence
> Is thoroughly maintained without activity or exertion,
> And hence we speak of so-called "spontaneity."

In addition, it is stated in The All Creating King (*kun byed rgyal po*):

> I—universal creativity—have no commitments to protect:
> Since I have no causes or conditions, there is no need to stress out over accomplishing anything;
> Since I am spontaneously present, there is no need for any analysis;
> Since I am primordially knowing, there is no need to know;
> Since I am self-emergent, there is no need for causes and conditions;
> Since I am devoid of good and bad, there is no need to adopt or discard;
> Since I am devoid of things, I am explained as being "absence";
> As for the continuous flow of primordial wisdom that does not operate on the level of things, [30]
> That is named "simplicity."
> The unitary whole within the [enlightening] mind is indicated as solitary.
> Since all phenomena, howsoever they may appear, are
> Are mental phenomena complete in and as the enlightening mind,
> I explain them as being "spontaneously present."

In that way, these four are each divided into four semantic classes consisting of: (1) indicting (*gnad bkrol*) within [the courtroom of] suchness, (2) confining (*'gag bsdam*) within [the prison of] the actual self-emergent primordial wisdom, (3) binding (*chings su bcing*) within [the cell of] the unproduced which is beyond the domain of thought, and (4) convicting (*la bzla ba*) within that which transcends the causal networks of activity and striving.. Hence, this presentation of the sixteen doctrinal categories is the presentation of the crucial rubrics of this treatise.

To expand on that, those sixteen are to be recognized as being (1) the abiding reality which is primordial, (2) the yoga (tuning into the natural state, *rnal 'byor*) of remaining within its range, (3) activities that are devoid of vengefulness, and (4) the spontaneously present Reality-gestalt. Therefore, dimensions as yet unseen are symbolically evoked in the great exhaustion of the intellect and the transcendence of phenomena. It is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):*

> By way of the difference between the three times and the timeless,[17]
> There is a singular continuity[18] in which there are no junctures or boundaries, and thus
> There is no beginning, middle, or end.
> The enumerations of time being primordially exhausted,
> There is a great sameness, and out of the sound of this great sameness[19]
> There is a shining forth which is not predetermined and even
> Within the ensuing presence of neurotic conceptuality, it remains in itself devoid of any certainty (*cha med pa*).
> The entire dimension of the natural Great Perfection
> Is contained within the maṇḍalic center of the intellect.
> It is not something manifest, neither is it an object. Even neurotic conceptuality
> Does not need to be eradicated, since it ceases right where it stands.
> The root of the dimmed awareness that has never experienced straying,
> Being primordially eliminated, without analysis, just is (*'dug*).
> No one at all senses this entire dimension of the Great Perfection, wherever it may be.
> Also, all of these coarse elements,
> Being self-dissipating from the very beginning,
> Having no place to go, they have dissolved into themselves. Therefore,
> Your own body is primordially absent, and
> You are aware right here in the immediate moment, devoid of considerations of what is earlier and what is later.
> By way of all of this being re-collected into a timeless point,

The non-manifest, manifest, and semi-manifest[20]
Of[21] one, two, six, and three[22]
Are un-manifest, and also in the natural sound of reality's dynamics
There is a transcendence of the apprehension of spiritual levels and the spiritual levels themselves
In which the Great Perfection is primordially present, yet no one at all senses it.

Primordially devoid of any type of progression, [31]
This path is primordially near;
This is primordially present within ourselves and yet
No one has seen this before. How dull is our inherent intelligence!

The depth intention of the meditative state that does not abide [in the extremes],
Being devoid of discursive meditation is primordially present,
And yet no one has understood this before!

Concrete identities and conceptual objects of apprehension
Are all, from the very beginning,
Self-presences by way of ourselves[23] within reality.
Such is primordially manifest, and yet no one has cognized this before!

The five emotional distortions that are bound by the false conception of self[24]
Are primordially and naturally arisen within awareness.
Although [emotional distortions and awareness] abide together, no one has recognized this![25]

The four elements, earth, water, fire, and air
Are primordially your own private objectifications[26] [of the five light intensities],
And yet no one has seen this before. How dull the eyes are!

The quintessence of the esoteric precepts that epitomizes the ultra-secret,
Is naturally resonant without interruption. And yet
No one has heard even this!
Is there no such thing as an ear sense faculty, or what?!

The scent of the in-dwelling expanse and awareness,
There is no occasion when you are separated from it—it surrounds and envelops
you—
And yet no one has sensed this! Are their noses clogged?!

The flavor of the unified esoteric precepts on the three quintessential elixirs
Are primordially the quintessence of the body and mind, and yet
No one has tasted just this! Have their tongues been cut off?!

The inherently pure appearances adorned with color
Are not separate from your own body—
Like the body and its shadow—
Are present without night and day, and yet
No one has felt this! Are their bodies just inert matter?!

The mental phenomena of bliss that suffuse your sufferings
Are in-dwelling and ineffable, and yet
Nobody has understood this! How dull is the mind!

The piling up of saṁsāric predispositions
Is primordially present as/within the Reality-gestalt, and yet
No one has seen this! They are objects of compassion!

Objects having arisen to the senses tied up in conceptions of the self,
The ensuing various flickering of the egoistic thought and memory
Primordially and naturally dawn as the Enjoyment-gestalt, and yet
No one can remember all this! How forgetful!

The agents, the means of action, the activity itself, the stressing out over
accomplishing something, and
The clamor of people (ca co) gathered together, all this
Is primordially the Emanation-gestalt, and yet
No one knows this! How thoroughly dull!

Whatever you imagine and the flickering of memory[27]

Are like the uninterrupted flow of a river,
Always carrying away your own psyche.
Meditating naturally, letting go without striving,[28] and yet [32]
No one has included this within their experience! How distracted is the mind!

Our aural and visual processing of the environment and the beings therein,
When you analyze it, is devoid of inherent existence.
As the view of disrupting the stronghold,[29]
[The Great Perfection] is primordially present, and yet no one has seen this!
Are the doors of the all your sense faculties blocked?!

In brief, vision reveals the key point of the inner structure (*phug thag*) in which all phenomena—i.e., presences that are interpreted as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—are nothing other than presencing as the playfulness, the dynamism, and the ornamentation of the self-emergent primordial gnosis.[30] Unrestricted wisdom's simplicity confines [all phenomena] within their natural resting place of self-emergent primordial gnosis. By way of their spontaneous presence within self-emergent primordial gnosis, [all phenomena] are bound within the conduct of the naked natural dissipation of whatever presences. Since all phenomena are nothing other than self-emergent primordial gnosis, they are convicted as the fruit within the scope of solitary spontaneity.[31] Although all these are expressed individually, their meanings are encompassed within the sphere of self-emergent primordial gnosis. Just this is delineated in terms of analogy (*dpe*), significance (*don*), and indication (*rtags*).[32] It is stated in *The All-Creating King* (*kun byed rgyal po*):

If you wish for a definite realization of the meaning [of all phenomena being
encompassed by primordial gnosis],
Think of space as an analogy.
The significance of the analogy is that reality is un-produced,
And the indication is that your mind itself is ceaseless.
The reality that is like space is
Symbolically evoked by the analogy of the space.

And:

> All phenomena are the enlightening mind. As for an analogy of that,
> The appropriate analogy for all phenomena is their own nature being like space, and
> The significance of the enlightening mind is also like that.

This [i.e.., the enlightening mind] is the expanse or the source of all phenomena. Although, in the range of space there is presencing in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in the manner of the manifest environment and the life-forms therein, they are nothing other than the lighting up within the essence of awareness, and although all phenomena appearing as the enlightening mind are mentally fabricated and conceived by mind, the enlightening mind itself is not created by anything at all. Again, it is stated in *The All-Accomplishing King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Everything is fabricated by the enlightening mind, but its own singularity is not fabricated.
> As for its fabrication of everything, the enlightening [mind] itself fabricates their nature, and
> With respect to the un-fabricated nature of the enlightening mind's own singularity itself, it does not need to be fabricated.

The teaching that all phenomena are within the range of self-emergent primordial gnosis in that way is the adamantine body [of this text].

Now then, the extensive explanation of the limbs have five topics: (1) Absence; (2) simplicity; (3) spontaneity; [33] (4) solitariness; and (5) the individual. Also, from among those, the first—i.e., absence—has four: (1) Indicting [in and as absence]; (2) confining [in and as absence]; (3) binding [in and as absence]; and (4) convicting [in and as absence].[33]

ABSENCE

INDICTING ALL PHENOMENA IN AND AS ABSENCE

INDICATING ALL PHENOMENA IN AND AS THE ABSENCE OF THINGS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Of these I will first teach on the topic of absence.
The nature of absence is the emptiness of essence.
Within the great openness of the enlightening mind equal to the extent of space,
Whatsoever appears is similarly devoid of inherent existence.

The essence of awareness and all phenomena that shine forth within its sphere are primordially empty and devoid of identity, and thus all discursive elaborations are completely pacified and un-produced. It is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

Serene and insubstantial awareness
Is devoid of discursive elaboration, concrete things, and characteristics.

A DELINEATION OF AN ANALOGY AND CORRESPONDING SIGNIFICANCE FOR "ABSENCE"

Just as the transformations of the four elements in terms of the external environments and internal life forms howsoever they may manifest
Within the circle (rum) of the expanse of the vast sky
Are forms of emptiness/empty forms that lack any kind of being of their own,
Likewise, the phenomena that light up within the [space-like] enlightening mind are just like that.

The world's formation (*chags*) and disintegration manifest within the range of space. However, since they lack essence within the range of space, manifestations lack [their own] nature, and manifesting things, i.e., the production and disintegration of the four elements, are devoid of any true nature.[34] This is true even to the extent of some type of partless atomic particles; the support and supported phenomena are not established in actuality. Similarly, awareness and all

the phenomena that shine forth here within the range of that awareness also lack any nature of their own. It is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Therefore, all the environments and life forms of appearances and their
> interpretations *in toto*
> Do not abide within the dimension of the sky; they are absent. Just so,
> Because the sphere of the great openness of the enlightening mind is so vast,
> All Buddhas, sentient beings, environments, and life forms abide within it,[35]
> Although in its reality of the thorough purity of everything
> Its non-duality is free from all reductionism whether reifications or negations.

PHENOMENAL APPEARANCES THAT LIGHT UP WITHIN THE NATURE OF AWARENESS HAVE NO BEING OF THEIR OWN[36]

> **Just as whatever images of a magical illusion that appear**
> **Are empty in nature, without any concrete existence, similarly**
> **All phenomena of appearances and their fictive interpretations, from**
> **the very moment they manifest,**
> **Have never wavered from the enlightening mind, being without**
> **concrete existence.[37] [34]**

Thus, whatever phenomena appears, be it appearances, i.e.., the entire world which is the environment, or fictive interpretations, i.e., sentient beings which are the contents of that environment, is without any being of its own. This is like the environment and beings of a magical illusion—they have neither diverged nor ever wavered from[38] the range of awareness. *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)* states:

> All phenomena—appearances that can be interpreted as environments and the
> beings therein or as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—
> Have never wavered from the enlightening mind of their own accord.[39]

INDICATING THAT PHENOMENA WHICH LIGHT UP IN THIS WAY HAVE NEVER WAVERED FROM THE RANGE OF SPONTANEOUS AWARENESS

> **Just as a dream has never wavered from sleep,**

And from the moment it manifests [in and as a dream] is devoid of having its own nature,
So too appearances which are interpreted as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa
Have never wavered from the range of the enlightening mind and are devoid of substantial things and characteristics.

The places, people, and so forth of a dream have never wavered from the range of sleep. Similarly, phenomena that are the personal projections of the six types of living beings have never wavered from the expanse of awareness. All phenomena of pure appearances, such as the three spiritual gestalts, also lack even the slightest wavering to a place other than the expanse wherein awareness is free from the dualistic notions of apprehended object and apprehending subject.[40] In *Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug phrad)* it is stated:

The six types of living beings and the four types of birth
Are both born from reality's expanse and return into the expanse.
The appearance of apprehended object and apprehending subject, i.e., the object and the mind, as different
Is apprehended within the expanse of reality, and apprehends in the expanse.[41]
And within the range of reality's expanse itself, there is neither apprehended nor apprehender.
Also the full measure of the enlightened knowledge of the Buddhas of the three times
Appears out of reality's expanse and knows this expanse.
Their knowing is unceasing, and that which is known is the expanse of reality—
This openness where the three spiritual gestalts are encountered, naturally manifesting and naturally free.

ALTHOUGH APPEARING AS AN EXTERNAL OBEJECT, IT IS IN FACT ESTABLISHED NEITHER AS MIND NOR AS SOMETHING OTHER THAN MIND

Even when phenomena appear to your mind in that way,
They are neither mind, nor are they other than mind, and thus

Are nothing, though vividly apparent in the nature of a magical illusion
Right from this very moment transcend linguistic and conceptual expressions
Therefore, all phenomena appearing to the mind
Should be known as absence from the very moment they manifest.

These phenomena, which appear to our own perspective in terms of the five objects such as visible forms and so forth,[42] as well as those which appear as the environment and its life-forms, appear in the mind, and thus are nothing other [than the mind]. Although they deceptively appear as though they were other [than the mind], [35] since they lack an independent being. Just like a dream or a magical illusion, they are not established as anything other [than the mind], but, like the eight analogies of illusion,[43] are also not established as/within the mind.[44] Through analyzing the particles, whether with or without parts,[45] as empty forms which, although they do not exist, clearly appear, shows that they are just the same in that phenomena lack a self. Thus, through the ways mind-as-such self-presences, you can know the expanse that is empty and unchanging. In *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)* it is stated:

> Seek the realm of the enlightened nucleus/quintessential realm through the power of subsidiary phenomena (*yan lag chos*)[46] and
> Through the method of not conceptualizing any discrete aspect at all, revel in that;
> The Reality-gestalt does not exist as something other than the natural emergence of the enlightened nucleus.[47]
> Considering[48] a single atomic particle [even one that is seemingly] free from any polarized parts,
> Even it does not abide [as something real], and in this [discovered absence of its ontological status], the excellent meaningful primordial gnosis naturally emerges.
> When, within its immediacy one does not conceptualize, and in the experience of its vast nucleus
> One embarks on the path of thorough purity, and thus attains the king of sameness,

> Which, since it is unchanging and devoid of change, has no place for attachment and
> Similarly, any apprehended objects being absent, has no site for the mind.

Question: Aren't you explaining that everything is mind?

Answer: Here, I am teaching a series of clear distinctions between [the Mind-Only and the Great Perfection views on this issue]. In general, appearances that are interpreted as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are explained as being the enlightening mind. Those appearances are concordant in the sense that they have never wavered from the range of unitary awareness, and they naturally manifest as the playfulness, dynamism, and ornamentation of awareness. Thinking of that, we call [phenomenal appearances] "mind." It is like having named the light rays of the sun the sun, and thus we say, "go sit in the sun-room."

There are two ways in which this teaching can be directly harmed: Reasoning and scripture. As for reasoning,[49] it [absurdly] follows that the mind would manifest colors and polarized parts because the appearances themselves have colors and polarized parts. And since it would [absurdly] follow that the mind is external and appearances are inside, they both would become confused with each other. And it [absurdly] follows that, at the time of one's own death, the environment and the beings therein would also die at the same time, and so forth. Thus this position can be damaged by way of logical reasoning[50] of very many consequences.

As for the damage to the position by way of scripture, it is stated in *The Spirit Mirror of the All Good (kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long):*

> The assertion that appearances are mind is a deviation from me.

And it is stated in *The Naturally Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar):*[51]

> [Smart guy:] Why are all these diverse phenomena held to be the mind?
> [Dumb guy:] Since everything emerges [from the mind], the diverse phenomena [are said to be] the mind.
> [Smart guy:] Would the fruit—i.e., Buddhahood—also emerge [from the mind]? [36]
> [Smart guy continues:] It is not feasible that a sentient being could become enlightened.
> Just as, for example, a black piece of coal,

Lacks any whiteness no matter how much one cleans it.
Therefore, although sentient beings who have strayed [from primordial awareness]
May have practiced meditation, they cannot become purified.[52]

And it is stated in *The Tantra Condensing the Definitive Meaning (nges don 'dus pa'i rgyud)*:

Stupid ones who have not experienced the definitive meaning
Say that appearances are their own minds,[53]
Like taking brass for gold.

Here, these days there are certain people who are arrogant in their knowledge of the Great Perfection and [followers of] ordinary vehicles that assert appearances to be their own minds. They speak without differentiating the positions [of the various schools], and thus propound a very grave mistake. Hence, mind and enlightening mind are not the same at all. Ordinary mind is the adventitious impurity of the three realms of cyclic existence involving the eight modalities of perceptual consciousness along with the mental factors. Enlightening mind is awareness, self-emergent primordial gnosis, devoid of substantiality and concrete characteristics, and it is the expanse of everything, i.e., cyclic existence, and what is beyond cyclic existence.

Here [in the context of Longchenpa's discourse], it is held that appearances and their mistaken interpretations dawn as the dynamism or the playfulness of the enlightening mind, and hence they are called "enlightening mind," this being a mere case of assigning the name of the fruit to the cause.[54] Other than that, one should recognize the manifestations of cyclic existence and that which transcends it as being the dynamism of awareness. It is not at all the case that awareness itself is established as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and you should recognize that it is the unimpeded source of appearance.[55] You recognize that lighting up in terms of objects (*yul snang*) is absence vividly lighting up in a primordial purity that is groundless (ground-absence), empty and radiant, while it itself is not present as mind or other than mind. Since this dynamism and play are groundless, when freedom takes place, they are naturally cleansed away like awakening from a dream. Having awakened, one recognizes that, having never left one's own original bed of intrinsic intelligence, the immutable reality gestalt, the things and characteristics [of the dream] fall away. As for differentiating the particulars of such matters, other than myself, there is no one. Besides those who assert appearances as mind and those who

assert them as something other than mind,[56] there is none.[57] This is because in this context even followers of our own school have not been able settle this, and hence they assert the dawning as the dynamism, playfulness, and ornamentation of awareness to be the essence [of awareness].[58] With respect to that, dynamism is the capacity of awareness, and thus it appears individually as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa like the appearance of a single ray of sunlight opening a lotus and closing up a water lily.[59] As for the playfulness [of awareness], it is the playfulness in terms of the radiance[60] of awareness just like the way a butter lamp plays in its light, and the sun plays in its rays.[61] [37] Ornamentation is the way in which the naturally dawning essence of awareness is adorned when its self-presencing lights up in arrays. This is similar to the way the sky is adorned by a rainbows, the sun, the moon, the planets, and stars. These are also discussed in texts such as *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

> The essence of dynamism is unimpeded/unceasing.

And:

> This unimpededness [i.e., dynamism] conjoined with non-duality (two-absence),
> I teach as the essence of play.[62]

And:

> Therefore it should be called "beautiful adornment."

This elaborate digression is now finished.

INDICATING THAT AWARENESS ITSELF IS NOT ESTABLISHED ANYWHERE AT ALL

> **Thus, the lighting up of objects is the nature of absence, and accordingly**
> **The nature of subjectivity—the enlightening mind—is also**
> **Essentially absence like space;**
> **It should be recognized being beyond linguistic and conceptual expression.**

The ground of manifestation for the appearances which are falsely interpreted as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, that is to say the essence of awareness, is not present anywhere, like space. It is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

The enlightening mind is in the nature of the sky.

As for an analogy for all phenomena being like the enlightening mind,

The appropriate analogy for everything is their own nature being like the sky.

HOW ABSENCE'S OWN-FACE IS PRESENT[63]

The actual enlightened nucleus, i.e., the self-emergent primordial gnosis,

Is devoid of causal networks, and hence the abyss of cyclic existence is eliminated;

It is devoid of good and bad, and hence saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are easily equalized;

It is devoid of deviation and obscuration, and hence the three existences[64] are definitively settled.

Within the essence of unadulterated (*zang ka*),[65] radiant, and raw (*rjen pa*)[66] awareness there are no fabricated causal networks, and thus falling into cyclic existence and the abyss of pleasure and pain[67] are eradicated. Saṃsāra in its entirety emerges from the unimpeded mode of appearance of cause and effect and yet, since cause and effect are not at all present within our own face—awareness—there is no deviation, no obscuration, no ethical considerations of good or bad. Hence, however saṃsāra and nirvāṇa may deceptively appear, within the essence of awareness they are equalized in a stress-free environment; since you no longer experience them as existing in fact, your mind becomes relaxed and at ease.[68] Within the range of awareness that is nowhere (nothing) at all, though it seems like phenomena are arising and abiding, not being experienced as presence, they are primordially free ("fallen away"). You merely remain directly within the realization of just that primordial freedom, and by way of that you superimpose this as buddhahood but in fact it is not at all the case that you have gone to the positive dimension because you have never wavered from your own space-like natural disposition in the first place! It is stated in *The Pouring of Everything into Awareness (rig pa spyi blugs)*[69] composed by the master dGa' Rab rDo rJe: [38]

Equality is neither conceived in terms of objects nor grasped as an object of the mind, and thus

You intrinsically remain within the openness in which body and mind are equal.[70]
All systematic manifestations of awareness light up from that, yet
By your very nature, you have never stirred from the winds of equality.[71]
You pour all concrete objects into a state that is free from objects,[72] and they abide in this state of dynamic balance.
Primordially the duality between objects and the absence of objects never took place, and thus these two are perfectly indivisible.
You cannot make distinctions between sentient beings and Buddhas, between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
This is because substantial and non-substantial are equal within the expanse and
Buddhas and sentient beings are equal within the expanse and
Conventional and ultimate[73] are equal within the expanse and
Deficiencies and talents are equal within the expanse and
High and low, and cardinal and ordinal directions are equal within the expanse.[74]

From the moment these dualistic oppositions appear, they manifest within sameness, devoid of good or evil.
At the time of abiding, they abide within sameness, devoid of good and evil.
At the time of dissolution, they dissolve within sameness, devoid of good and evil.

Although they manifest as not same, they arise from within the expanse of sameness.
Although they abide as not same, they abide within the expanse of sameness.
Although they dissolve as not same, they dissolve within the expanse of sameness.

Manifestation and non-manifestation are primordially absence within the expanse.
Abiding and non-abiding are primordially absence within the expanse.
Dissolution and non-dissolution are primordially absence within the expanse.

At the time of manifesting, those [dualistic oppositions] are self-manifesting and take hold of their own-site.
At the time of abiding, those oppositions are self-abiding and take hold of their own-site.

At the time of dissolution, they are self-dissolving and take hold of their own-site.
The appearance of manifestation, abiding, and dissolution is continuously arising and dissolving.
Since the flow of arising and dissolving is uninterrupted, they are not interrupted by cause and effect.
Since cause and effect are absent, the abyss of saṃsāra is eradicated.
The body that is the saṃsāric abyss[75] being absent, where would the pitfalls be?

The openness of the All Good, primordially unchanging,
The range of the Adamantine Hero devoid of transformations,
These are merely a case of you seeing your own face.
We merely designate that by the name "Buddha."

As for the absence of errors and obscurations, it is stated in the *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

Within the singular organizing seminal nucleus of the Great Perfection[76]
Errors and non-errors are non-dual,
Pitfalls are naturally cleansed away,
Free from all these dualities, in this singularity there is nothing to be abandoned.
Ati-yoga's view, meditation, conduct and
Fruit are primordially non-dual, and thus
The errors and obscurations that apply in terms of dualistic experience are not relevant here. [39]
The four, view, meditation, conduct, and fruit
Are the self-emergent primordial knowing from the beginning, and thus
The pitfalls and obscurations that are comprised of causes and conditions are absent.
The Great Perfection's view, meditation,
Conduct, and fruit are spontaneously present, and thus
The pitfalls and obscurations of striving with hope and fear at meditation and accomplishment
Are cleansed away.
Since there is nothing higher than me,

I am the primordial gnosis of un-obscured radiance.
Although I appear on in the lower eight vehicles,
This is a case of actions stemming from my compassion.
Undifferentiated wisdom resides in me,
And by way of this primordial gnosis of a wholeness in which everything remains distinct,
I am thoroughly cleansed of all pitfalls that one could fall into.
Within the naturally radiant undifferentiated wisdom,
There is no differentiation into the duality that characterizes pitfalls and obscurations—it shines.

HOW THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOWER VEHICLES ARE ABESENT IN THE GREAT PERFECTION SINCE IT TRANSCENDS THEIR DOCTRINES[77]

Within enlightenment—space-like mind-as-such—
There is a natural absence of duality, there is neither polarization nor bias, and thus
There is neither cultivating the view[78] nor guarding the commitments;
There is neither striving in enlightened activities[79] nor obscuration to primordial knowing;
There is neither training in the spiritual levels nor any path on which one proceeds;
There are neither subtle phenomena,[80] nor dual [phenomena], nor connected [phenomena];[81]
And since enlightenment is beyond all reductive strategies of reification and deprecation, it is devoid of both dharma and non-dharma.
The openness in which distinctions are absent which is like the golden island,
The space-like naturally emerging mind-as-such,
Is the nature of absence, beyond all illustrations and expression.

Awareness, which is your own true perspective, is not present anywhere. Hence, the doctrines of view, meditation, conduct, and fruit, the spiritual levels and paths that are characterized by training and traveling, generation and completion stages of meditation that are involved with characteristics,[82] commitments involved with external objects of observation, spiritual activities that are to be practiced, primordial wisdom that is well-achieved and so forth are completely absent in it. Since reificaton and negation are absent, it is impossible to distinguish between that which is religious and that which is non-religious. Everything that presences and arises is determined to be self-presencing, primordially free, and thoroughly pure. Thus, just as when you go to the golden island, even if you search for ordinary earth and stones you do not find them, just like that even though you seek doctrines that do not lead to liberation and objects to be abandoned by means of the view, meditation, conduct, and the fruit, you do not find them. This is because within the state where everything is the self-presencing of the unobstructed awareness in which phenomena have been consumed [40] the awareness that is clear and lucid (*sa le*) without effort is unobstructed. Therefore, concerning the absence of striving and accomplishing by way of the ten natures, it is stated in *The All Accomplishing King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> As for this enlightening mind, the enlightened nucleus of everything,
> Its nature is primordially and spontaneously present, and thus
> There is no need for striving or accomplishing by way of the ten natures.[83]
> The analogy for my own nature in its entirety is like the sky:
> No one at all strives with regard to the sky—
> There is nothing to strive for in the sky.
> The entire sky is beyond all striving and accomplishment to be done;
> Similarly, I am the all-accomplishing enlightened nucleus, the enlightening mind.
> Because I am completely beyond scope of cognitive processing,
> In me views are absent and meditation is also absent from the very beginning.
> Similarly, transcendence even by means of those ten natures
> Does not work in relation to me.
> People who possess vehicles focusing on cause and effect,
> Who wish to see me and to see my nature,

Just as when you try to walk in space, you fall to the ground,
When they proceed by way of the ten natures, they will fall.
My own being is taught to be the definitive source.
Because I am beyond the entire scope of cognitive processing,
There is no view or meditation and accordingly
The ten natures' likewise are absent in actuality and
If[84] you do not realize that there is meaning in the ten natures, then
Even if you actively look for me, you will not find me. Hence,
Do not look for me but just rest in suchness![85]

In my un-produced freedom from elaboration, there is nothing you must divest yourself of, and thus
There is no need to protect your vows and ethical codes.

Since the enlightened nucleus is primordially and spontaneously present,
There is no need to engage in the activities of exertion and accomplishment.

Since self-emergent primordial knowing is devoid of obscurations,
The primordial knowing that is awareness is not made radiant.[86]

Since everything resides over at my place,
There is no place to go through training.

Since I am present in everything pervasively,
There is no path by which one proceeds towards me.

Since I am primordially free from the dualism of subject and object,
The term "subtle" does not apply.

Since everything is suffused with my form,
From the very beginning, so-called "duality" is not present.

Since I am the primordial wisdom guy from the very beginning,
No one at all can delineate my identity.

Since I am the purifying and embracing enlightened nucleus of all,
The secret instructions do not exist somewhere else. [41]

And it is stated in *Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug phrad):*

> The great openness free from activity, devoid of the extremes of production and disintegration, that is
> The openness which is devoid of distinctions just like the the golden island, is
> The enlightening mind which is the root, eliminating the darkness of the extremes,
> Although within the enlightening mind the four extreme views are not abandoned,
> Untouched by the extremes, pitfalls are automatically eliminated.

HOW AWARENESS IS BEYOND THE CAUSAL NETWORKS STEMMING FROM VIRTUE AND VICE

> **As for the penetrating awareness, the enlightened nucleus of all meaning,**
> **Since it is devoid of fabrication, virtue has never been of any benefit;**
> **Since it is devoid of change, sin has never inflicted any harm;**
> **Since it is devoid the effects of karma, there is no maturation of karma—pleasure and pain;**
> **Since it is devoid of good and evil, there is nothing to abandon or take up—saṃsāra or nirvāṇa;**
> **Since one can neither be conceptualize nor verbalize it, it is just free from having an origin;[87]**
> **Since it is devoid of anteriority and posteriority, the succession of lifetimes is a mere designation;**
> **What is appropriated at all? Who revolves where?**
> **What karma? What is its effect or maturation?[88]**
> **Ponder and analyze the space-like dimension.**

Concerning this, in *The Precious Copper Lettered Scripture (rin po che zangs kyi yi ge can)* there are statements such as the following:

> Look intently at the dimension of awareness! Are there the ten virtues to be practiced? Are there commitments to be protected? Are there the view, meditation,

> conduct, and fruit that are to be taken into one's experience? Is there fruitional karma and are there unfortunate rebirths?

Accordingly, within this naked Reality-Gestalt of penetrating awareness, no matter how much virtue you have done, since there is no auspicious rebirth, there is no benefit. No matter how much vice you have done, since it does not transform into something bad, no harm is inflicted. Since the natural essence of awareness is not established as anything whatsoever, karmic effects and their fruitions—i.e., virtue and vice, good and evil—are absent. Due to the fact that there are no past and future lives, and that there is no karma bound up with the notions of cause and effect, saṃsāra is just a mere name. For those who do not realize that the natural essence of awareness abides in that way, saṃsāra appears in terms of pleasure and pain. For Yogic Adepts, on the other hand, all the exhaustions [i.e., the appearances of pleasure and pain] are termed the primordial purity of the empty exhaustion of phenomena. Within the range of awareness, although saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, virtue, and vice appear as in a dream, since the natural essence of awareness is unsullied, the causal networks stemming from virtue and vice are absent. Since these are absent, there are no past and future lives, and since the essence of birth is exhausted, the three states of existence are emptied out into the great primordial purity. This state of affairs should be called "shaking saṃsāra to its core." [42] When yogic Adepts who realize awareness by way of dwelling within the natural essence of awareness in that way rest in this meaningful essence, no matter how much karma they have performed, whether virtue or vice, there is not even the slightest benefit or harm. This is because they have integrated themselves with the direct mode of being [of awareness].[89] Therefore, for those ultra-dynamic Yogic Adepts, virtue and vice are absent, and thus they behave freely vis-à-vis appearances. Since [for these yogins] there is nothing other than the recognition of awareness as self-presencing, they [i.e., super-yogins] never go beyond intrinsic penetrating awareness. Regarding this mode [of never going beyond penetrating awareness], the twelve adamantine jokes inspire trust and confidence. It is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):*

> Hey enlightened core of Adamantine Speech of all the Buddhas! Look at the view—self-emergent primordial wisdom! It is beyond virtue, vice and the cultivation of views—amazing! Since the ground is un-agitated,[90] no matter what

physical and verbal activities you have done, you are free from benefit or harm! Ha Ha![91]

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the abiding reality of the final character of all things! These appearances do not change even one hair, and do not change their color—amazing! However much you may imagine pleasure and pain, in reality nothing will ever change! Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the primordial wisdom of universal origins—the great emptiness! No matter how many various activities of mindfulness and thinking you have done, they manifest as the play of awareness—amazing! However many of these activities you have done, within the matrix of the unborn, freedom is unobstructed! Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech yourself! Listen up again! Look at the primordial wisdom that is all pervasive—the emptiness of reality! It is abides together with the unborn [emptiness] from the very beginning—amazing! Although a person, having lifted aloft a sharp sword, may slay several beings with a single stroke, the continuum of that person is completely free from benefit and harm. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the primordial wisdom—the universal presencing of your own empty cognition! All appearances, howsoever they may appear, manifest as your friends—amazing! Whatever appears has never wavered from your own grounding. Ha Ha!

Hey enlightened core of Adamantine Speech! Look at the lighting up of empty awareness in which all is freedom. Your neuroses are their own best remedy—amazing! The distorted emotions are fall away of their own accord. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the essence of the empty awareness in which everything is pure! Without striving and exertion, the fruit is found within oneself—amazing! By taking hold of this unitary awareness, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety are cleansed of duality.[92] [43]

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the home (*tshang*) that is the universal ground—the great empty essence! The six types of transmigrators light up as the three spiritual gestalts—amazing! Without those transmigrators having done the slightest bit of meditation, they are simultaneously enlightened. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the fruit wherein the great empty three spiritual gestalts are complete from the beginning! The three times are in a seamless continuity—amazing! Without practicing the six transcendental perfections, the accumulations of completed in a single moment. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the universal sameness of the great emptiness revealed when you nakedly let be within awareness! All the performance of activities manifests as the ornamentation of awareness—amazing![93] Everything that one tries to adopt or discard fall away within the view. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the great primordial emptiness—the emptiness of emptiness! All the Buddhas are present in the abyss of saṃsāra—amazing! You fall into the abyss by way of purposive meditation. Ha Ha!

Hey Adamantine Speech! Look at the concretized notion of emptiness that is actually a non-emptiness![94] A vehicle that holds absence to be a self—amazing! They hope to attain the unborn through production![95] Ha Ha!

HOW ONE "ALWAYS ABIDES AS SUCH WITHOUT POLARIZED OPPOSITIONS"

If you reflect repeatedly, inquire repeatedly, or even analyze by way of reasoning[96] [into the nature of all phenomena],
Even the parts are unreal, and you cannot find their extremely subtle particles and
They lack even a momentary existence devoid of dualistic cognitive fragmentation between subject and object.
From this very moment, all phenomena abide within the nucleus of all significance—the fundamental characteristic of reality.

> **At the time of examination there is absence, and likewise when you are not examining. Therefore, of course [all phenomena] are absent.[97]**
> **Mere atomic particles are not observed even as a mere convention, and thus**
> **Phenomena in all their aspects are always just absence.**
> **You should recognize all phenomena as being like an illusion, having the nature of unreality.**

This dimension in which the causal networks stemming from virtue and vice are absent is the absence of differentiation in terms of the contiguity of the three times—past, future and present. Even if you search repeatedly for such differentiation among the three, the interior, exterior, and the interstices of awareness, you do not find it. Even if you analyze the subtlest atomic particles among all the internal and external environments and the beings therein, you do not find this differentiation. Even if you investigate the imaginary instant of the mind and awareness, you do not find it. Even if you conceptually differentiate the times of past, future, and present, the prior factor has ceased, the later factor is not yet produced, and the present is lost between these two—one cannot find the what differentiates these. Similarly, you cannot find the causal networks stemming from virtue and vice driven by karma and its maturation. [44] When one investigates in such a way, [the differentiation between the three times] appears as absence, and even when not examining or not investigating, there is nothing other than that absence. This is because the enclosures of discursiveness are utterly absent [i.e., irrelevant] and because there are neither intrinsic nor generic characteristics that define phenomena. They do not even exist conventionally, although to childish ones—i.e., ones who are deluded with respect to the dimension of suchness—they do indeed appear in that way.[98] Even though they are apprehended when they appear, it is not the case that they also possess presence. This is because, just as although illusory activities appear in terms of the performance of virtue and vice, the illusory human being never experiences the fruition [of these illusory karmic deeds], the essence of awareness likewise never changes.. It follows that if cause and effect were truly established, they would be devoid of transition and transmutation since karmic activities are not distinguished. Therefore in truth there was never a time when causal networks stemming from

virtue and vice were present for anyone at all,[99] and for yogins in particular such networks were never present, even as a falsity, because there are no fruitions to be experienced. Faith is generated with regard to these as well by way of the seven marvelous concise words. It is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):*

> E Ma Ho! Hey Enlightened core of Adamantine Speech, listen up! I, the All Good, teach that, due to the essential point that inherent intelligence itself is free from birth and death, one who takes the lives of ten million sentient beings and a person who practices the ten perfections lack even the slightest difference.
>
> Hey Adamantine Speech! I, the All Good, teach that, due to the essential point that reality is devoid of discursive elaboration,[100] a being who continually cultivates the meditation on emptiness and a person who has not fixed his or her mind on emptiness even for an instant lack even the slightest difference with respect to awakening.
>
> Hey Adamantine Speech! I, the All Good, teach that, due to the essential point of unconditioned awareness itself, one having faith who has performed limitless conditioned virtues and a man who continually exerts himself in taking lives lack even the slightest difference in terms of completing the accumulations [of merit and wisdom].
>
> Hey Adamantine Speech! I, the All Good, teach that, due to the essential point that the primordial wisdom which is awareness is devoid of coming and going, a being who physically and verbally manifests various signs of reality and a person who has not trained his or her mind in hearing and reflecting [on the teachings] even for an instant lack even the slightest difference with respect to seeing the nature of things. [45]
>
> Hey Adamantine Speech! I, the All Good, teach that, due to the essential point of reality being devoid of production and cessation, a being who experiences the hot and cold hells and a being who experiences the bliss of the Buddhas lack even the slightest difference with respect to obtaining the door of realization.

Hey Adamantine Speech! I, the All Good, teach that, due to the essential point that awareness is devoid of change, a being who eliminates discursive elaboration of mental phenomena and one who views the self as permanent lack even the slightest difference in terms of realizing the abiding reality.

Hey Adamantine Speech! I, the All Good, teach that, due to the essential point that the Reality Gestalt is naturally present, a being who has worshipped, praised, and made prayerful requests externally and a being who dwells free from the performance of any ritual observance lack even the slightest difference with respect to attaining the fruit.

Therefore, O Adamantine Speech, a being who conducts him or herself in accordance with these great self-arisen words finds the confidence that is arrived at without effort, whereupon he or she awakens to the fact that appearances and the three spiritual gestalts are indistinguishable.[101]

RELEASE BY WAY OF REALIZING THE DIMENSION OF ABSENCE[102]

Exactly when dreams and illusions appear, they are precisely the nature of emptiness.
Although those unskilled child-like [meditators] are bound by addiction,
Those who recognize the nature [of the empty dreams and illusions] cannot be bound. Similarly,
Even if those beings who are not expert in the dimension of absence
Are bound[103] and revolve [within cyclic existence] by way of their addiction to the self,[104]
Those who are skilled in the yoga of awareness
Decisively settle upon just that [i.e., the illusory appearances, etc.] as absence from this very moment and hence
Dissolve it into the openness of reality in which causal networks are absent.

When magical displays are revealed in a magic show, immature children are attached and think of them as true, and hence their minds are tangled up in this, but, since adults recognize just these [displays for what they are], [their minds] are not bound. Accordingly, phenomena that appear in such a way are always absent,[105] and thus [these phenomena] vividly light up as the self-manifestation of illusory empty forms, but those beings who are addicted to self conceive [of these] as being veridical, and thus they are bound within the continuum of saṃsāra. [46] The Visionaries (*rnal 'byor pa*) who recognize suchness, however, transcend bondage and freedom and dissolve within the openness in which concrete characteristics are absent.

Also, it is stated in *The Jewel Lamp Sūtra (dkon mchog ta la la'i mdo)*:

> All phenomena are like the One Gone to Bliss—
> Those who have the mind of a child, who fixate on concrete qualities
> Should cultivate the dimension of absence in the [transient] world.[106]
> If they look [toward these phenomena], they will recognize it by means of this analysis.

For the Visionaries who realize the appearance of all phenomena as an absence of truth, [these phenomena] are never not free—they radiate within the openness of the enlightening mind.[107] Hence, the very thing that is not appropriate for those who stress out over cause and effect is taught to be extremely suitable for Visionaries. It is stated in *The Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol)* composed by the master dGa' rab rDo rJe:

> That reality which is freedom within non-duality
> Is a phenomenon possible [for the Visionary], but impossible for those on the lower vehicles;
> The young musk deer can easily climb on a rock-face;
> For him what is impossible for other creatures is possible!
>
> The freedom within the openness that is awareness devoid of actions
> Is impossible for those on the lower vehicles, who operate in terms of striving and accomplishment—

On the path of yoga equal to space, which is devoid of all purposive activity, however, it is easy!

The primordially awakened awareness devoid of objects[108]
Is impossible for those wander in saṃsāra. In terms of the progression of cyclic existence[109]
Those of inferior intelligence who assert a substantial subject
Dissolve into the sky! It dissolves into the openness devoid of foundations!

Within the singular seminal nucleus without boundaries
Dualistic appearance is impossible, but according to stages of cyclic existence
There are those with distorted minds who cling to notions of identity and difference, but they
Dissolve into wholeness! It dissolves into the openness of reality!

Within the self-emergent primordial knowing that is devoid of causes and conditions,
The manifestation five poisons is impossible, but in terms of the nature of saṃsāra
There is desire for the pathways of saṃsāra that obstructs enlightenment, but it
Dissolves into the self-emergent! It dissolves within the openness of primordial knowing!

Within the spontaneous presence that is non-polarized and free from extremes
Partiality and prejudice are impossible, but according to the nature of cyclic existence
Your addiction to polarized viewpoints is the demon of equality.[110] In the Great Perfection, however, it
Dissolves into non-polarization! It dissolves within the openness of spontaneous presence!

The reality that is unimpeded emptiness devoid of concrete qualities
Is impossible in terms of the dawning of appearances, but in terms of the nature of saṃsāra.

It dissolves within appearances! It dissolves within the openness of indeterminacy![111] [47]

Devoid of differentiation! Free within the openness of spontaneous presence![112]
Devoid of unity and separation! Free within the openness of the seminal nucleus!
Anything at all shines forth! Free within the openness of indeterminacy!
Lighting up in and as form; Free within that lighting up!
Resounding as sounds—hearing is naturally freeing.
Whichever of the five senses manifest, sights and sounds, seeing[113] and hearing,
Other than seeing your own face by yourself, there are no other objects [to be perceived].
Devoid of duality! Free within the equality of objects and minds!
Since everything emerges from the singular equality, [it is called] the expanse;
Since all good qualities are produced by it, [it is called] the ground;
Since everything is free within the absence of agents and actions, [it is called] the openness.

ABSENCE—THE NUCLEUS OF ALL MEANING[114]

Within the limpid and consummate mind-as-such devoid of eternalism or nihilism
The primordial knowing devoid of subject-object structuration naturally abides.
Within the naked awareness devoid of causal networks
The singular seminal nucleus that is devoid of [the ethical norms of] virtue and vice abides.
Within the unimpeded awareness devoid of center or margins[115]
The underlying intention of the totally positive Reality Gestalt naturally abides.
Within the cleansing and perfecting inherent intelligence—the enlightened nucleus of absence
The pure non-objectifying underlying intention of the Conqueror radiates.

This empty and luminous awareness, the natural essence devoid of [the extremes of] eternalism and nihilism, transcends interiority and exteriority and subject-object structures. Just this, free from moral judgments tied up with causal networks, is devoid of maturations and predispositions. Hence, it is the singular intention of the All Good in its unimpededness. It is stated in *The Sky Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen mka' la lding):*

> Mind is invisible; no one can see its cause.[116]
> Therefore, how could there be virtue without vice?
> Our system [i.e., Great Perfection] is hooked in with the primordial source [i.e., emptiness].

THE MEANING OF THE UNDERLYING INTENTION THAT REALIZES [ALL PHENOMENA] AS ABESENCE

> **For the Yogic Adept who tunes into [the fact that all phenomena are] magical illusions, awareness lights up naturally.**
> **And yet these absent phenomena dawn as play unceasingly.**
> **From the very moment they manifest, you ascertain that they are absence. Hence,**
> **Without engaging in the activities of acceptance or rejection at all,**
> **You remain in the open, carefree great "letting be."[117]**

To the Yogic Adept who realizes that the self-presencing of all phenomena are magical illusions, whatever appears dawns as the playfulness of complete absence. Hence, "letting be" (*cog bzhag*) involves sealing [all phenomena] with the primordality of meaningfulness. [48] The very person who is cast into the cage of intellectualism with respect to what exists and does not exist is cut off from being a Yogic Adept even more than an ordinary person who does as he or she pleases. Hence, be carefree! As for this it is stated in *The Sky Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen mka' la lding):*

> One who is cast into the cage of intellectualism will not pass beyond the three realms.
> One who relaxes within an idiot's uncontrived mindset
> Does not abide within either saṃsāra or nirvāṇa.

THE FAULTS OF THE LOWER SCHOOLS WHICH DO NOT REALIZE [ALL PHENOMENA AS] ABSENCE

> **Immature beings tricked by absence,[118] like wild deer**
> **Whose thirst impels them to chase after water of a mirage,**
> **Long for meaning[119] in the words of mistaken jargon, and hence**
> **The doctrines of individual tenet systems bind them up in an ontic status of phenomena.[120]**
> **Since the *eight stages* [*i.e., the lower vehicles*] *do not eliminate the* pitfalls of intellectualism,**
> **They lack the vision of the pristine state—the nucleus of all that is meaningful.**

Immature beings are tormented by their objectification of "phenomena" just as mistaking a mirage for water torments wild deer. And, since the eight lower vehicles are addicted to their respective discourses (*chos*), they suffer and all are equally out of touch with the essence of that which is meaningful. As for that, the [fictitious] self of persons is a mental neurosis that is addicted to habitual patterns of subject-object structuration leading to attachment-aversion, and the [fictive] ontic status of phenomena is superimposed by mind without existing objectively, and is all the stains of addiction to the view, meditation, conduct, and fruit of individual discourses of mind as final.[121] [All] These—ordinary people, extremists [forders], and [followers of] the eight lower vehicles are equal inasmuch as they do not realize the abiding reality. It is stated in *The Sky Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen mka' la lding):*

> Whomever desires a fruit and is addicted[122] to a path grounded in absence,
> Obscures the site of liberation because of desire.
> Emptiness does not exist in terms of the limitations that obtain for [followers of] the eight lower vehicles in terms of the four [sets of polar oppositions]:
> Darkness and illumination, presence and absence, eternalism and nihilism, and cause and effect;
> It [i.e., emptiness] is in fact just like the expanse of space.
> One who wishes to search for its boundaries
> Is like a blind bird searching for the limits of space: s/he does not find them.[123]

It is impossible that anyone has fabricated this very irretrievable dimension.
In this absence of any discursive[124] objects of knowledge, it is impossible for you to find any boundaries.

ABSENCE—THE NATURE OF MEANING

Ati-Yoga, the expanse that transcends [all] phenomena and/or discourses,
Is the nature of space, devoid of everything. As for that,
From this very moment, without wavering from your own bed—i.e., the Reality Gestalt—[49]
Let yourself be in this primeval expanse of space,
Spontaneously present in and as great bliss.

With respect to the Great Perfection, the self-emergent primordial knowing, it is not established as anything at all, and remains within the great spontaneously established luminous openness. As for that, your remaining within the great originally pure primordial expanse is called the wisdom-energy (*dgongs pa*) of the Reality Gestalt, [revealed as] one's own bed. It is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):*[125]

[This wondrous teaching] abides primordially
Within the natural expanse of the great secret,
Within this Reality-Source—emptiness which is absence—
And is the great playfulness that primordially emerges
As that which has the non-objectified natural presence.
No one at all abides in this site.
No one at all manufactured this site.[126]
There is nothing sublime about this at all.
It is free from the condition of staying and coming.[127]
Similarly, the site of the great primordial emptiness
Is the mode of the expanse beyond [even] absence.
Within this, there is neither interior nor exterior,
There is no view of above or below.

There is no-one at all within the polarizations and boundaries, and
There is not even the slightest objectification in that.
Whoever cognizes this inaccessible dimension
Is awakened [even] before I, The All Good,
In the manner of the primordially abiding without establishing themselves
Within the prior primeval ground,
The site of the great non-abiding primordial knowing of
The Buddhas of the original primordiality.
A person who apprehends this as the site [of enlightenment]
Is just one who apprehends
The secret mantra of all the Buddhas
Within the purifying and perfecting nucleus of this [condition].

Original purity—one's own bed—has been definitively decided to be the site of the purifying and perfecting nucleus—the Reality Gestalt.

HOW ONE DOES NOT BECOME ENLIGHTENED BY WAY OF CONDITIONED PHENOMENA OR DOCTRINES

If you do not realize this esoteric awareness that is the dimension of the Buddha's wisdom energy,
Doctrines of activity will never free you—
Do you not understand that this is all conditioned, impermanent and perishable?
How will you get in touch with the dimension of the indestructible nucleus
With a tight knot extending throughout your body, speech, and mind?

If you do not realize the dimension of the Reality Gestalt—inherent intelligence—the three doors will not become free in this lifetime through the phenomena (discourses) of striving and exertion. This is because, since even religious itself behavior will become enmeshed in the vast tangle of knots, awareness is constrained and obscured, and even though you obtain mere happiness which is the fruit of produced phenomena, since they [i.e., the phenomena] are

compounded, they are transitory, like a vase. [50] You will never get at the indestructible dimension of the Reality Gestalt because activity and non-activity are contradictory, and whatever is un-produced is necessarily indestructible.

Since this attainment of the indestructible Reality Gestalt is seen by not doing anything, i.e., by relaxing within one's own place, all religious activities enmesh you in a tangle, and hence you are no closer to Buddhahood by even a single hair of a horse's tail. Thus they [i.e., religious activities] are called "the fetters of cyclic existence that have no substance (*don med*)." It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Because, with respect to doctrine, there is nothing to be done.

And:

> Although all your thoughts may be unmistaken, you never accomplish anything.[128]
> On account of the tight and extensive knots that bind your body and speech,
> It is extremely difficult for you to encounter the dimension of reality.

The reason for this [why one does not achieve awakening through doctrines of activity] is extensively treated in that same text (i.e., *The All Creating King*):[129]

> Hey Great Heroic Being! Listen up!
> [My teaching] does not accord with the Great Vehicle of cause and effect, and thus[130]
> You should definitely understand my instruction of Universal Creativity.
> All phenomena, however they may appear, and
> The reality of your own mind are identical from the very beginning, and hence
> You should not conceptualize this according to the [ordinary] system of cause and effect.[131]
> Examining the suchness of your own mind,
> The essence of your own enlightenment will shine forth.[132]
> Without realizing this, you label it [i.e., the suchness of your own mind] individually,
> Designating [terms such as] "conventional appearance" and "ultimate non-appearance."'

Conventional and Ultimate are not two things, but in truth are one.

Naming the real [in this dualistic way], even I would be deluded!

Neurotic desire for happiness is a disease;

You obtain happiness [only] through the absence of desire.

Buddhahood is not achieved through accomplishing activities[133]—

It is spontaneously present due to effortlessly abiding in your own nature.

[Therefore] rest without conceptualizing within your own abiding nature!

ADVICE [*ON THE WAY IN WHICH ONE SHOULD ABIDE*] *WITHOUT STIRRING FROM ONE'S* OWN BED—ABSENCE

Therefore, if you desire the supreme dimension of abiding reality,

You must completely release all

The phenomena that bind you and wear out your three doors that are [meaningless] like children's games,

Look to the dimension of the great, uncontrived sameness as [your unrestrained awareness] pervades the domain without activities and passed beyond objects of thought that is

A non-discursive space that is the nature of absence,

The site of the total fulfillment (*rdzogs chen*)—the nature of reality!!

Resign yourself (*kho thag chod*) [to this dimension] through[134] transcending exertion in actions bound up in notions of cause and effect!

Just as children, having gathered on the playground, become caught up in playing games, whatever phenomena that are activities that you do of the three doors which are uncertain, unending, [51] tiring and insignificant increase, but, without discriminating (*blang dor med pa*) cause and effect, let these phenomena be released and allow your awareness to pervade freely into [a state of] intense bliss, like an old man being warmed by the sun. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

I do not teach that the authentic Buddha is present

In this name which is a [dead] metaphor for the Buddha-dimension.

Whoever sees the Buddha as present,

Does not find the Buddha [who is nothing other] than reality's expanse.

Not looking at ["enframing"][135] the Buddha, you realize that your natural mind is free from activities.

If you examine closely, and absence[136] is your natural mind primordially radiating outwards;

[This absence] does not appear as a real thing—[its] nature[137] pervades everything.

This is the lighting up of the essence of what is:

For those who possess[138] the vehicle of cause and effect [and] who think[139] that this is not [the lighting up of the essence of what is],

Due to [preoccupation with] various [exoteric concerns such as] abandonments, purifying obstacles,[140] and blessings,

The natural mind deviates from the reality that is free from activities;

Having left it [i.e., the natural mind] behind in its natural place,[141] you look for it in some other far off place;

Within this easy, comfortable state, you willingly stress yourself out —

As far as the disease of mental fatigue goes,[142] there is nothing greater[143] than that.

The un-agitated contemplation is a fastening stake[144] that holds you to your own mind's reality].

With respect to the [natural mind's] primordial condition, it never wavers and it is never lost.[145]

Deceptive ones[146] who long for the un-agitated contemplation

Teach scriptures which require interpretation,[147] i.e., the Great Vehicle of cause and effect.

With respect to the [natural mind's?] primordial condition,[148] it never wavers[149] and it is never lost.

It is the antidote to all [the stress relating to] striving and achieving, and it destroys [them].

If I, Universal Creativity, were to teach my teaching

To the retinues of teachers who teach cause and effect,

[They] would engage in exaggeration or deprecation, saying, "effects arise from causes."
Those who possess a yogic contemplation, who desire Buddhahood,
Due to desiring contemplation, forsake the uncontrived yoga.
The uncontrived pristine state is universal reality, and
The Buddha is not at all separate from this reality.
The name "Buddha" is a [dead] metaphor.
The activities of reality are your own mind—nothing else—and
Your own mind is explained as being the uncontrived Reality Gestalt.
This uncontrived state is primordially un-produced, and thus
There is never any striving[150] or accomplishment[151] within the un-produced dimension—
You will never achieve[152] the state in which activities are absent through striving and accomplishment.[153]

A FINAL SUMMARY OF INDICTING [ALL PHENOMENA] IN AND AS ABSENCE

Within the inherent intelligence[154] which is devoid of dualistically structured interiority and exteriority
Time and place are absent, and you transcend the phenomena of production and cessation. [52]
Since it is pure like the sky[155] there is no doorway through which to guide a vehicle.[156]
Conceiving[157] of that as an object,[158] you become completely deluded and therefore,
Throw the deviations and obstructions [that cause one to conceive of natural awareness as] possessing phenomenal ontic status to the ground!
One resolves [all phenomena] in and as the great encompassing great emptiness—
The undifferentiated range of the Totally Positive [i.e., the intrinsic intelligence], and, having done so,

You take hold of your natural place within reality devoid of transition and transformation.
This [taking hold of one's own place] settles [all phenomena] within the expanse of the non-localized primeval space
With a surge of energy [that falls] outside the domain of 'views,' and thus[159]
They are entirely indicted (*gnad kun bkrol ba*) as phenomena of/which are absence.[160]

In this way, all phenomena of what appears and is interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and dualistically structured interiority and exteriority, however they appear, right in their own time they are absent [but] inherently they shine forth, and are resolved within the awareness of unconditioned pure space as empty forms. This is because all that appears is empty appearance, and appearances are empty-in-awareness. In reality they are all indicted as naturally luminous self-emergent primordial knowing in its empty radiance, a vividly appearing absence that lacks any origin or ground. It is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

In the sphere (*yul*) of emptiness, discursive elaborations are absent.[161]
Radiance transcends the boundaries of existence and non-existence.
[This empty radiance] is endowed with the retention of un-forgetting recollection.
It is the path of the direct immediacy of vision.[162]
It is beyond the elaboration of many indications and words.
Not produced from mantras or spells, it is primordial perfection itself.
It is thoroughly free from causes and conditions.
It is free from all the stains associated with views and meditation.
There is no periphery, and there is no objectification of a center.
There are no observable facets, nor are there objects.
Deities are absent and mantras or spells are absent also.
Phenomena are absent and it is beyond all neurotic conceptuality;[163]
Enemies are absent, and friends are absent too.
It is not physical, and it does not appear to the senses.
Phenomena do not appear through the power of [neurotic] thoughts.

It is utterly absent, and it is utterly without comprehension.
I am absent, and my retinue is also absent.
The expanse [of reality] is absent, and the gestalt of awareness is also absent.
Virtue is absent, and the maturation of sinful actions is absent.
Life is absent, and the objectification of its severance is absent.
The [two spiritual] accumulations are absent, and the objects [i.e., the merit and wisdom] which are collected are likewise absent.
The Buddha is absent, and sentient beings are absent.
The site [of enlightenment] is absent, and even emptiness is absent.
Expedient means are absent, and the retinue of hearers are also absent.
Places are absent, and the three times themselves are also absent.
The existence of a conjunction of the three times is absent.
Therefore, within this state of absolute absence,
I manifest without any differentiation
My domain (*yul*) is beyond the [ordinary spiritual] levels, [53]
I do analyze in terms of deeds and conduct. Therefore,
Within the equality of the three times
My domain is absence, free from any grounding in [neurotic] thought.

The teaching that all such phenomena are to be indicted into a state of absence is now complete.

ARRESTING [ALL PHENOMENA] IN AND AS ABSENCE

LEISURELY EQUALIZING AWARENESS WITHIN THE RANGE OF ABSENCE

Having thus indicted [all phenomena] in and as the phenomena of absence,
Completely letting go (*cog gzhag*) within the range in which meditation is absence is the crux (*'gags*) of awareness.
Whatever dawns is bound within that range in which acceptance and rejection are absent and
This is the leisurely equalization of the mind in its great openness.

By means of recognizing whatever phenomena appear as absence, one releases (*cog gzhag*) all appearances into a state devoid of contrivance and pollution and relaxes into the absence of acceptance and rejection. As for that, by arresting [whatever appears] into the um-impeded awareness complete in and as one, since there are no [external] appearances or [internal] cognitions, they become equalized into the primordial emptiness. It is stated in *The Great Khyung (khyung chen):*

> The Ground of thorough release, primordially cleansed of marks and signs
> Is devoid of exertion, free from activities, and eliminates mental obstacles;
> The three types of encounter[164] are the critical juncture (*'gag*) of playfulness in and as objects
> Whatever [interpreted appearance] dawns is not avoided (*spangs*), but is confined within the interstices between the [external] object and the [internal] mind.

THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT NATURE

> **This natural 'letting be' (*rang gzhag*)[165] is a condition of great bliss and it is an indestructible expanse.**
> **It is the uncultivated and spontaneously present supreme contemplation and is**
> **Eternally present like the powerful central current of a river.**
> **When you release [awareness] into this uncontrived state of equality, it inherently (*ngang gis*) radiates outward.[166]**

The eternally present contemplation of the naturally abiding awareness is just like the flow of a river, and when a yogic adept rests in this pristine uncontrived natural 'letting be,' he or she actualizes [this contemplation, i.e., reality itself]. It is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

> Within the great non-dual self-emergent bliss that I have explained,
> You are free from the extremes of presence or absence of meditation.
> Within the realization of the powerful wisdom, the dimension of inherent intelligence,
> The verbal conventions of meditation and non-meditation completely fall away.

You dwell in the natural range of non-dual great bliss, and
Through letting yourself go without conscious effort you achieve a completely seamless unity.
Since its flow is uninterrupted, it is like the River Ganges.
I teach this in order to benefit those possessing the highest faculties.

HAVING DISCOVERED THE NATURALLY EXISTENT CONTEMPLATION, ARRESTING DEVIATIONS AND OBSTRUCTIONS IN AND AS ABSENCE [54]

Within the space-like reality however it may be arranged
Movement and transformation are absent, and hence distraction and non-distraction are absent.
This supreme and infinite (*rab 'byams*) expanse that is a seamless union [without fusing and separation]
Is not a sphere of activity that can be expressed with words—
[Rather] it is the natural dawning of awareness bursting in and as wisdom's openness and
Even if one has heard many [words describing the expanse of reality], there is no taming (*'jur*) the mind and
Without speaking, the yogic adept who is beyond the realm of thought,
Having determined [reality's expanse] as lacking illustration and non-illustration,
Does not find either meditation or an object of meditation, and hence
Does not especially need to slay the enemies of lethargy and distraction.

When, having seen the awareness without wavering from one's own bed, the yogic adept who abides in that range discovers the natural contemplation, there being no clinging to a purposefully-focused mind, all appearances never waver from their natural bed of contemplation. Then, due to the dawning [of appearances], consciousness is illuminated, and due to abiding [in that] one finds the depth-contemplation—you are pure by yourself without needing to abandon the deviations and obscurations of contemplation such as lethargy and

excitement by means of the union of inner calm and incisive vision. Furthermore, discovering (*rnyed pa*) the natural contemplation, one does not understand it through viewing, hearing, or explaining words and [spiritual] jargon. Some people have trained in past lives in an intense manner, and hence in this life they experience (*shar ba*) penetrating wisdom as bursting forth into the openness with respect to the topic (*gnas*) of definitive meaning; some people have been introduced to the unobstructed awareness through the blessings of the lama; some people have completed study (*thos*) with respect to the topic (*gnas*) of the meaningful enlightened nucleus; some peoples' minds exist as a state of natural and leisurely 'letting go.' All these [four groups of] people [unlike the studious and disciplined types above] realize and engage in the seamless unity. It [i.e., the space-like reality] is not a sphere of activity other than that. It is stated in *The Pouring of Everything into Awareness (rig pa spyi blugs):*

> Within the space-like reality that is released into its own place just as it is,
> Movement and transformation of awareness are absent, and hence distraction and non-distraction are absent.
> This supreme and infinite expanse that is a seamless union [without fusing and separation]
> Is not a sphere of activity that can be expressed with words—
> [Rather] wisdom bursts forth within the openness and awareness dawns by itself and
> Even if one has heard many [words describing the expanse of reality] there is no taming (*'jur*) the mind and
> Without speaking, the yogic adept who realizes this openness
> Determines [reality's expanse] as lacking illustration and non-illustration and
> Does not find either meditation or an object of meditation, and hence [55]
> Does not need to slay the enemies of lethargy, distraction, or neurotic conceptuality.

Should the thought occur that since this text so closely resembles the root verses [of the Treasury of Abiding Reality], the root verses must be stolen, such is not the case: *The Expression of Worship of the Root Verses on the Middle Way (dbu ma rtsa ba'i mchod brjod)* is present in *The Piling Up of Jewels (dkon mchog brtsegs pa)* and some of the expressions in (Vasubandhu's) *Treasury of Knowledge* such as "The fleshly form of the previous existence's body..." etc., are also present in

The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus Tantra (thig le kun gsal gyi rgyud). And it is stated in *The Short Commentary on the Good Lion (seng ge bzang po'i 'grel chung):* Expressions such as 'Alas the sphere of the various textual systems...' etc., are likewise present in *The Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty Five Thousand Verses (nyi khri).* Therefore, applying the [literary device?] called "the concordant integration of the meaning of the words," I have set forth these profound topics as an embellishment in order to inspire faith in certain people.

THE EXPANSE OF THE REALITY GESTALT TO BE ETERNALLY ONE'S NATURAL ABODE

Within[167] this enlightened nucleus of absence—the state which is primordially free of [external] appearances and [internal] minds—[168]

Distortions are left just as they are (*rang gzhag*) within the openness of reality's equality, and

Continuously abide within the range of the Reality Gestalt.

[All external appearances] spiral within the solitary blissful openness where the polarizations of dawning and dissipating are absent.

From the very moment these appearances dawn, you take hold of your own place, and recognize them as natural manifestations;

At the time they abide, you take hold of your own place, and recognize them as naturally abiding;

At the time of their dissipation, you take hold of your own place, and recognize them as naturally dissipating;[169]

Since [interpreted] appearance (*shar*) and abiding[170] naturally dissipate with the openness of reality,

They are the mere playfulness of the Reality Gestalt and do not waver to another place—

They are self-presencing natural reflections of emptiness[171] devoid of polarizations, and

They abide within the actual enlightened nucleus without good or bad.

Although all external appearances appear to be produced, cease, and abide within the space (*klong*) of awareness, [in reality] they never waver from the range of emptiness. All of a mirror's reflections do not waver from the surface (*ngos*) of the mirror but, if you investigate, there are no [actual] forms; there is just the surface of the mirror. The non-wavering of the manifestation, abiding, and dissipation of internal memories and notions from the range of awareness is just like the manifestation, abiding, and dissipation of the ocean's waves not wavering from the river. Nothing ever wavers from the openness of the spontaneously present three spiritual gestalts, the unobstructed conduit (*sgo*) for the manifestation of the empty radiance that is your own bed—the Reality Gestalt.[172] It is stated in *Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug phrad)*:

> Whatever is present is present within its natural range.[173]
> Whatever departs departs into its own range.
> Within the expanse of enlightenment going and coming are intrinsically absent.
> The absence of coming and going is the enlightened gestalt of [all] the conquerors.
>
> Whatever one says is said within its own range.
> Whatever one expresses is expressed within its own range.
> Within the enlightening mind speech and expression are intrinsically absent.
> The absence of speech and expression is the enlightened speech of the conquerors of the three times.
>
> Whatever one thinks is thought within its own range.
> Whatever one realizes is realized within its own range.
> Within the enlightening mind thought and conceptuality are primordially absent.
> Separation from thought and conceptuality is the enlightened mind of the conquerors of the three times.
>
> Being absent, whatever arises is the Emanational Gestalt.
> The enjoyment of [that Emanational Body] itself in itself[174] is the Complete Enjoyment [Gestalt].
> Since the actual ground for that is absent in that, [the absence itself] is the Reality Gestalt.

The fruit, i.e. the three Spiritual Gestalts, is spontaneously present openness.

IN THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN MIND AND APPEARANCE, THEY ARE ARRESTED INTO AN ABSENCE OF TRACES[175]

> **All the static and moving states of what lights up, however one may interpret it and**
> **The five poisons, and so on are all dynamic processes of awareness. With respect to that,**
> **However they manifest, they are recognized right at their own time (*rang dus*) as such [i.e., dynamism of awareness].[176]**
> **[In this recognition] the dynamic processes run their course,[177] naturally vanish, and following that (*rjes*), there is just absence.[178]**
> **'Letting go' into the interstices between mind and its objects is the nexus (*'gag*) of equality.**
> **The absence of traces in the sky (*bya lam*)[179] is the nexus of self-emergent primordial wisdom.**
> **The identity of all [phenomena] and the expanse is the intersection (*'gag*) between water and its waves.[180]**
> **[All] phenomena are primordially confined within this great esoteric nexus, and hence**
> **One is released by the mere recognition of these vital points (gnad), and reality is revealed.**

Whatever appearances as many various types of the five external objects and internal ego-driven memory and conceptuality may manifest [as interpretations of those outer objects], they are to be recognized right away as interpretations of objects, and the inherent possibilities in their manifestation are now brought to fulfillment.[181] By remaining in that state, they naturally fade away and are released into a state of tracelessness: you completely let go of whatever arises [as an interpretation of appearance] or you enter into vastness (*yangs par 'gyur 'jug pa dang*) or you relax into the appearances right when they light up (*snang thog*). You confine that into the nexus whichever of these three [is most relevant],[182] and hence you take hold of your own place in the natural bed of the Reality Gestalt. Furthermore, if you do not recognize the dynamism of

awareness, then it is just the normal/ordinary simplicity (*phyal ba rang ka*). By looking [at these appearances] without bringing the dynamic processes to fulfillment, even if they disappear, you are not able to cope with a major misfortune thereby.[183] If they do not even disappear, since you have not directly (*thad kar*) cut off [the webs of interpretations] and so forth,[184] [you must realize that] these three-fold key points are the great nexus.[185] The comfortable happy mind that desires the awareness that dawns in this way of its own accord being absent, there is a state of [ordinary] simplicity (*phyal yas*). [Therefore] you should let yourself go without any exertion into a natural flowing (*rang babs su*) [57] and non-distracted state.[186] It is stated in *The Great Khyung (khyung chen)*:

> Having abandoned the mind that seeks pleasure and harmful phenomena,[187]
> Look to the natural letting be and you are free from the activities of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
> The mind to which appears the notions "This is self," "This is other"[188] is miraculous.
> You should eliminate the obstacles of appearances (*'gyus*), seeing (*mthong*), grasping (*'dzin*), and addiction (*zhen pa*), and by doing so,
> Let it all go, and all the extremes of verbal elaborations cease.
> Whatever miracles of the mind appear, they simply cease.
> Separated from phenomena, you bind them between the mind and its actions.

ARRESTING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO THE NEXUS OF VAST AWARENESS IN ITS GREAT OPENNESS

> **When, from within this great openness of intrinsic intelligence's wisdom intentionality**
> **[All phenomena manifest, abide, and dissipate,] they arise from equality, they abide in equality, and they dissipate into equality, lacking [ethical designations of] good and bad.**
> **There are no phenomena that are not [characterized by] equality, and that neither abide in nor are released (*grol*) into equality, and thus[189]**

They [i.e., all phenomena] are confined within the nexus (*'gag*) vast openness of primordial enlightenment.

The material environment and the living beings therein appear by themselves, abide by or, disintegrate by themselves, and become empty by themselves within the openness of the sky, but otherwise never waver from the range of the sky. Similarly, all phenomena manifest from within the openness of awareness, they abide in that openness, and they are released into that openness; they are arrested (*'gag bsdams*) into a state of intimacy with the openness of realization without wavering from the unimpeded empty awareness. It is stated in *The Pouring of Everything into Awareness (rig pa spyi blugs)*:

When [phenomena] arise, they arise from within a state of equality without good or bad.
When [phenomena] abide, they abide within a state of equality without good or bad.
When [phenomena] dissipate, they dissipate within a state of equality without good or bad.
Even the arising of inequality arises from within the expanse of equality.
Even the abiding of inequality abides within the expanse of equality.
Even the dissipation of inequality dissipates within the expanse of equality.

Although this passage was cited (*bstan pa*) above (in 38.4-5), it is not redundant because of the context (*skabs*), just as in the Kālacakra commentary called Puṇḍarīka the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti is cited three times, and in the Prasannapadā the Samādhirājasūtra is cited many times.

ARRESTING [AWARENESS] INTO A SPACE BEYOND CAUSE AND EFFECT

From within the unconditioned and spontaneously present awareness,
The vast wisdom-intention (*dgongs*) of effortlessly leaving things alone (*rang gzhag*) dawns.
The enlightening mind that transcends the causal networks driven by virtue and vice
Arrests and is arresed within the range of immutable reality.[190]

Meditation [58] and so forth are impure due to the defilements of cause and effect, and hence are just effort and exertion; here, awareness is determined to be devoid of cause and effect, and therefore [relax into] a pervasive equilibrium (*phyam gdal*) without doing anything at all. It is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> I—Universal Creativity—am beyond the network of causation, and hence,
> Since I am beyond cause and effect, I am beyond all domains of activities.
> Reality that transcends everything is the enlightening mind, and
> The enlightening mind is the enlightened nucleus of all phenomena.

INCARCERATING [ALL PHENOMENA] IN AND AS ABSENCE

INCARCERATING [ALL PHENOMENA/EXPERIENCE] INTO THE ORIGINALLY PURE PRIMORDIAL EMPTINESS

> **The wisdom-intention of space that is the nature of absence**
> **Binds all phenomena without exception into fetters (*'ching*). As for that,**
> **Just as the shackles of space have bound the material environment and the living beings therein,**
> **Tbey also have bound phenomena that light up by themselves (*rang snang*) in and as the great primordial emptiness.**

The range of space has bound the whole material world and the beings therein, i.e., appearances and their interpretation by sentient beings. Similarly, it has bound the self-presencing (*rang snang*) five external objects along with the internal mind that manifests and dissipates into the self-emergent primordial wisdom, and it has bound just that into the great natural purity/clarity (*rang sangs*) of emptiness. This non-wavering from the range of the unlimited (*rtsa bral*) primordial emptiness is to be called "condensing [everything] within a totally positive space." It is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

> When I teach having settled the meaning of the natural Great Perfection by means of the unmistaken words of the Teacher, the Enlightened Body Speech and Mind of all the Buddhas is the natural pure appearance of the All Good. I teach that the six

types of transmigrating beings are themselves the equality of the three times. Therefore it is said that my appearance and the many subjective minds that are not different from that are integrated into a single openness. All phenomena are free from negative emotions (*rnam rtog*) and they dissolve into the Totally Positive openness that is just me free from elaborations. Within this ocean-like openness my appearances naturally manifest, and hence all maṇḍalas are automatically included from the very beginning within the openness. Therefore, the openness of the Great Symbolic Gesture spirals within the singular natural non-abiding from the very beginning.

O Great Being! My appearance is the appearance of non-appearance! It is able to pervade and engage everything—existents, hearing, appearances, or sounds. Hence, it is called the "openness of the secret enlightened nucleus"; it naturally emerges in and as the Enlightened Body of Samantabhadra. My appearance however it has naturally dawned from complete absence [59] pervades and is called the "space that concentrates the naturally pure enlightened nucleus"; it naturally emerges in and as the Speech of the All Good. My appearance naturally dawns as the essence of all words and thoughts in this way, whereupon it is called the "space that includes memory and the enlightened nucleus of natural emptiness"; it naturally emerges in and as the enlightened mentation of the All Good.

Hey Great Hero! The being who is aware that all the Buddhas [exist] in the equality of the three times is said to "spiral in the my unitary space—the space of Samantabhadra.

When you do not try to contrive suchness
It is just like the sky unobstructed by clouds.
The factor of primordial clarity is primordially brilliant, and
The core of the sun naturally lights up
The brilliant sky in that way, and similarly
The Gestalt [i.e., the Enlightened Body] of the stainless essence
Is the enlightened nucleus that definitely concentrates all phenomena into the singular reality, and this

Is my maṇḍala itself.

Through condensing all the subjects (*chos can*),
The limits of the verbal categories relating to Reality are exhausted;
All this is my own mind—the mind of the All Good.
I—the Awakened One devoid of all neurotic conceptuality—
Cause the stench of subtle addictions to dissipate, and
Un-obscured lights manifestly appear
Phenomena cannot see phenomena, and thus
In me there is no object to be seen.

Hey Great Bodhisattva! All material things are the playfulness of the All Good. Therefore, I, the Buddha Samantabhadra, having made the many Enlightened Actions that operate in all the directions and transmigrating beings non-dual, attain the contemplation that is called the "exhaustion of all the expressions of the teaching itself." Then I become non-dual with the invisible sky.

O Great Being! My, i.e., Samantabhadra's, Enlightened Activities are said in this way to "emerge in and as the essence of the three spiritual gestalts"; one attains the view that is called the "Great Perfection of primordial wisdom that is the fruit of the completely pure Buddha who is the cause." At that time I naturally emerge without any doing or making, whereupon I appear as the vast and extensive primordial wisdom of the Enlightened Body, the playfulness of the Enlightened Speech, and the exalted activities of the Enlightened Mind. The appearance of the immutable primordial wisdom self-presences, and the time that consumes all phenomena causes the discursive elaborations of extreme [views] to dissolve. I naturally emerge as the intelligence (*yid can*) of the sky. [60] Having simultaneously attained control over the enlightened nucleus and concrete appearances (*sra ba'i snang ba*), I—the Totally Positive Samantbhadra—become the so-called "Ruler of all the Maṇḍalas."

THE FETTERS BEYOND STRIVING AND ACCOMPLISHMENT ARISING FROM CAUSE AND EFFECT

It [i.e., the dimension of awareness] is beyond the mere name 'saṃsāra,' beyond the activities of striving and accomplishment that arise from cause and effect—

Lacking virtue and vice and their corresponding benefit and harm, it is the empty range.

[In it] there is an absence of the mere name 'liberation,' and it is devoid of nirvāṇa [passing beyond sorrow]—

By means of the ten aspects of nature, any striving and accomplishment are absent.[191]

The depth character—i.e., the dimension of awareness—is devoid of cause and effect and [the attendant notions of] virtue and vice. Those who depend on the scriptures of provisional meaning, who teach and cling to them [i.e., cause and effect, virtue and vice] as existing will never become liberated. This is because the defilement of confusion totally obscures them. You should realize that in the natural Great Perfection [the significance of awareness] is beyond cause and effect, and virtue and vice! It is stated in *The Great Khyung (khyung chen mkha' lding)*:[192]

With respect to the mind-as-such, which is primeval and unconditioned,

[These people] teach the ultimate nucleus with their minds of ego memory and conceptions.

By verbalizing their [so-called] wisdom, they protect their own version of the truth [i.e., ideology].

They are skilled in words, and take cause and effect as the foremost [teaching].

Who besides just these people deserves to be in the hell of unceasing torment (*mnar med*)?

They are contrived in body and speech and they cling to designations with the mind.

Is there any other antidote for the [disease of] obscuring the truth of reality

That surpasses this [Great Perfection]?

Therefore, when you are uncontrived and separate from the agency and activities of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,

Besides this very Great Perfection, what else is there?

As for the ten natures,[193] realizing that the view, pledge/vow, empowerment, maṇḍala, spiritual level, path, spiritual activities, primordial wisdom, fruit, and reality are the ten absences is the view of the Great Perfection. As for that, it is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:[194]

The enlightening mind is like the sky, [and]
Within the reality that is the space-like mind-as-such
There is no cultivating the view and pledges do not need to be observed,
There is no exertion in spiritual activities and primordial wisdom lacks any obstructions,
There is no training in the spiritual levels, and likewise there is no path on which to progress,
There are no subtle doctrines/phenomena, no dual [phenomena], and no dependent [phenomena],
There is no delineation of definitive scriptures pertaining to something other than mind [itself].
Since [mind-as-such] transcends exaggeration and deprecation, there is no 'conviction' (*la bzlar med*) with respect to esoteric instructions (*man ngag*).
This is the Great Perfection view of the enlightening mind.

And:[195]

Hey Great Being!
As for [my] teaching that "There is no cultivation of the view," [61]
Since I am naught but the root of phenomena (*chos*), [and]
Since there is no need for oneself to look for oneself,[196]
I do not teach that objects exist other than myself.
Therefore I teach, "There is no cultivation of the view."

As for the teaching that, "Pledges do not need to observed,"
Your natural unobstructed (*mi khegs*) mind is not able (*mi thub*) [to be contained] through protecting [vows].[197]

Since [your own mind] is self-emergent primordial wisdom, one does not need to guard it.

As for the teaching that "There is no exertion in spiritual activities,"
Since the Great Perfection is primordially beyond the network of causation,
Those who desire results by engaging in spiritual activities through causes [will never do so].
[Rather], since there can be no longing for the results of the Great Perfection, [and]
Since there is primordially no exertion in spiritual activities,
I have taught, "There is no exertion in spiritual activities."

As for the teaching that "There is no progressing on any path,"
For the Buddhas of the three times and for the sentient beings of the three realms,
Progress is progress on the path of the enlightening mind.
Within that [enlightening] mind, Buddhas and sentient beings are non-dual.
Therefore, there is no progressing on the path to this [enlightening] mind by this [enlightening] mind.

As for the teaching that "There is no training in the spiritual levels,"
On this level of the enlightening mind, which is the expanse of reality,
There are those who desire liberation by means of training possess [the false notions of] cause and effect; [however],
With respect to this level of the enlightening mind—the expanse of reality—
I have never taught a scripture that establishes the contrived activity of training.

As for the teaching that "Primordial wisdom cannot cognize objects,"
These objects are, from the beginning, self-emergent primordial wisdom—
Within this condition of primordial knowing, there is no [duality between] primordial wisdom and objects.

THE ABSENCE OF ACTIVITY AS THE ACTUAL SHACKLES [OF MEANINGFULNESS]

Repeated striving and repeated exertion in things that wear you out
Are like children's mud houses—they are things that disintegrate.

Therefore, all striving and exertion in virtuous and non-virtuous activities based on cause and effect
Are phenomena that are always already bound into the shackles of absence.

Children build and destroy sandcastles (*bye ma'i khang bu*) on their playground. Similarly, [in meditation] one generates [visualizations], and having done so, one gradually absorbs (*bsdu ba*) them into emptiness, and so forth. These are practiced on the conventional level, but represent a belief (*'dzin pa*) in something that is ultimately absent. Hence, all things that involve the three doors' striving and accomplishment are like that.[198] The yogic adept binds all [notions of] virtue and vice and cause and effect into the great condition devoid of activities, passed beyond movement (*g.yo*) and striving. As for that, the following is stated in *The Great Khyung (khyung chen mkha' lding)*:[199]

The mind is invisible—no one has ever seen its causal networks;
Therefore, what is this notion of becoming free from sin through virtuous actions?

And [62] it is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:[200]

Since phenomena cannot be fabricated,
One engages them through the door of non-exertion.

And:[201]

Hey Great Being!
Those who, longing for greatness, exert themselves in meditation and accomplishment,
Do not attain such greatness through exertion in meditation and accomplishment.
This greatness is self-emergent and is great from the beginning.
Through engaging in meditation, you [attempt to] contrive the wisdom intention of the Buddhas, but
Those who [attempt to] contrive the wisdom intention of the Buddhas
Will not encounter their own natures for eons.

Hey Great Being!

Do not meditate on the mental depth contemplation!
Do not attempt to make primordial wisdom conceptualize in terms of objects!
There is no need to mutter with the mouth and recite heart [mantras]!
There is no need to make artificial hand gestures such as mudrās!
Do not perform the ritual wherein the mind emits and recollects its nature!
By remaining within the range, awareness becomes undisturbed and spontaneously present;
By dwelling within the nature, there is nothing for anyone to contrive.
Those who remain within [reality] just as it is without striving
Teach the absence of activity as the supreme ritual.
Through realizing the significance of this, you do not engage in karmic actions, [and]
Since you have not engaged in any karmic activity, you remain in suchness.
Those who abide in suchness
Will attain attain an unmistaken and uncontrived state thereby, [and]
Such [a state] is the unmistaken and uncontrived nature.
This itself refers to the unmistaken essentiality (*ngo bo nyid*).
Besides suchness, there is no Buddhist doctrine!

And also:[202]

Not realizing the uncontrived [dimension] just as it is,
They bless the external and internal environments and the beings therein into purity.
By way of all types of rites and the branches of enlightenment (*bodhyaṅga, byang chub yan lag*)[203]
One causes the wisdom deities of meditation to appear.
Having performed offerings in one moment, they request [the deities] to depart, and release the depth contemplation.
Repeated meditation and repeated releasing [in this way] are like children's sandcastles—
They are contradictory with my dimension that is uncontrived just as it is.

BINDING THE COMPULSIVE ACTIVITIES BASED ON CAUSE AND EFFECT INTO ABSENCE

Now[204] the yogic adept of the super enlightened nucleus
Determines all childish and provisional doctrines based on cause and effect
To be paths for those of inferior fortune who must [gradually] ascend [the vehicles] from below.
[That yogic adept] should bind [such doctrines] into the dimension that transcends all doctrines, i.e., the wisdom intention of one's own face—
Into shackles of space, devoid of all activities.

During childhood [one's actions accord with] the "doctrines" of [light hearted] play, but during adulthood [one's actions accord with] the "doctrines" of natural fatigue.[205] Similarly, when you have inferior intelligence, [one's actions accord with] the doctrines of the eight lower vehicles, [63] but when you have greater [intelligence], you abide in a naturally flowing way that exhausts the phenomena within the intensity (*ati*), and [one's actions accord with] the doctrine of the enlightened nucleus. Having realized that the Reality Gestalt is spontaneously present within yourself, you simply remain (*gnas*) without stressing yourself out over the ten natures.[206] It is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:[207]

Hey Great Being!!
The enlightening mind is the king among kings—
This universal creativity creates by means of the enlightening mind, and as for that,
There is nothing that is created outside of the enlightening mind.
The enlightening mind is primordially unmistaken.
Since it exists primordially, it is primordially devoid of error.
There is no superimposition of true or false onto this error-free [state].
It is beyond all stressing out over causes, conditions, and results.
Not understanding that [the enlightening mind is] perfectly complete (*byas zin*) and beyond striving and accomplishment,

If [sentient beings] look for fulfillment through the cultivation of the activities of striving and accomplishment,
As a hindrance to enlightenment, there is nothing greater than that.
By having no plan whatsoever with respect to non-abiding and non-conceptuality,
They will naturally abide within a domain of equality without neurotic conceptuality.
Being perfectly complete (*byas zin*) from the beginning, the mind of striving does not occur.
Whoever remains within the intense blissful state
Will become the enlightened nucleus of all phenomena.
They will not differentiate (*'byed*) between everyone's aims in terms of self and other.[208]
The enlightened nucleus that includes one and includes all
Illuminates, even without views, the enlightened minds of the Buddhas of the three times.
It also lights up the minds of all sentient beings without obstruction.

O Great Being, Listen Up!!
I—universal creativity—have completely fulfilled the aims of sentient beings.
I fulfilled their purposes—no one else needs to do anything.[209]

Doctrines that depend on others are not my teachings.
Conventional [truth] is completely and perfectly fulfilled in and as me from the beginning.
Being primordially perfectly complete, there is no need to cultivate any views.
Being primordially pure, there is no need to protect one's pledges.

Due to remaining completely within the level of primordial enlightenment,
There is no need to train in the levels of the vidyādharas and the ten spiritual levels [of bodhisattvas].

Due to being spontaneously present from the beginning without any striving,
There is no need to engage in spiritual activities from the beginning.

Due to not conceptualizing with respect to the domain /objects of self-emergent primordial wisdom,
There is no need to strive by means of the objects of awareness' primordial cognition.

Since great bliss and the Reality Gestalt are the same in the mind-as-such,
The three times—past, [present], and future—being absent, exist as [mere] distinctions.
All the marvelous conditions (*phun sum tshogs pa*) [for the teachings] such as time and place are the same/one/unitary and
All [phenomena] are the same, and therefore everything is fulfilled within me. [64]
The Great Perfection is completely fulfilled within me, and thus,
As for views, practice, spiritual activities, vows, spiritual levels, and paths,
There is no need for striving and accomplishment, just as was explained above.
If, not understanding such, you engage in striving and accomplishment,
You become incompatible with the dimension that transcends causal networks and through this
You will not encounter the dimension of great bliss, devoid of activities.
Ignorant, you will be stricken by the sickness of striving and accomplishment.
Therefore, as for the Great Perfection which transcends cause and effect,
It is not a sphere of practice for those lacking good fortune. Hence,
They should behave in accordance with the doctrine of cause and effect.

And:[210]

Since they lack fortune in relation to the significance of the Great Perfection,
They adopt (*gzung*) the provisional teachings of the vehicle of cause and effect.
I am primordially beyond the sphere of spiritual enterprise;
If I were to teach this to those unfortunate ones who delight in cause and effect,
Since [the faults of] exaggeration and deprecation would [inevitably] arise.
If I taught this, they would slander their own natural mind and hence,
They would born as the six types of transmigrators, and remain in saṃsāra eternally.

INDICATING [HOW SENTIENT BEINGS] ARE DECEIVED BY CONDITIONED EXISTENCE

> **Deceived by conditioned existence, look at the distorted appearances of saṃsāra!**
> **Polluted by striving—Think about saṃsāric distortions such as suffering!**
> **Doctrines relating to virtue and sin will never staunch the flow of suffering;**
> **Having accumulated karmic predispositions, they have wandered in these very high and low stations of saṃsāra**
> **Without any opportunity to become liberated from the ocean of existence.**

No matter how many phenomena of the three doors you have engaged in, this very deception brought about through ignorance with respect to the significance of awareness is illustrated by the way repeated past actions in the succession of your previous lives appear as various distorted appearances of the present. Whatever striving and exertion you have done is corrupted with respect to seeing the essence of awareness; the karmic actions of repeated striving and exertion produce [rebirths as] hell-beings, hungry ghosts, animals, etc., whereupon you are dependent on cyclic existence. Even if you have engaged in virtuous phenomena, having attained the mere happiness associated with having the body of a god or human being—the so-called "good cyclic existence—it is again consumed; this is cyclic existence. Non-virtuous actions mature as the sufferings of the unpleasant transmigrations, and through this you cycle in cyclic existence in life after life—there is no opportunity for liberation. It is stated in *The Great Khyung (khyung chen)*:[211]

> Cast into the cage of intellectualism, they do not pass beyond the three realms.

And it is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

> If you have not made the great medicine of abiding in the non-fluctuating balance,
> Then, because of proceeding to areas of high status [in saṃsāra], you will be seized by distorting emotions. [65]

You will not find the state of peace that is separate from eternal spiraling [in saṃsāra] and atomic existence.

BINDING THE ABSENCE OF ACTIVITIES INTO THE INTENTIÒN OF THE REALITY GESTALT

In that place where the flow of virtue and non-virtue has been cut off,
Within the range of reality, in the seamless unity,
That is the great esoteric definitive yoga.
Since it is devoid of striving and exertion, you have already arrived at the primeval level—
Letting go from the beginning, you take hold of the king's palace—the Reality Gestalt.

Without engaging in any activities of virtue or vice whatsoever, the yogic adept who does not waver from the range of purity—i.e., the sky-like empty and luminous awareness—is said to "take hold of the king's palace—i.e., the Reality Gestalt." Having done so, he/she just rests in his/her own bed of original purity, free from activities. It is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):*

This reality devoid of any ground or origin
Letting go without any striving—it is really amazing!

And it is stated in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*[212]

Whatsoever appears is the same within suchness;
No one should ever try to fabricate this!
Without conceptualizing in terms of this king of uncontrived equality,
Abide in the wisdom intention of the Reality Gestalt!

SUMMARY OF THE MEANING

Therefore, having discovered the moment in which phenomena appear,
Language which apprehends the significance of superimposed names and

Exertion in activities associated with good and bad, acceptance and rejection, or cause and effect
Are phenomena of absence, devoid of activities, like the sky; those who understand this
Bind all phenomena within the phenomena/doctrine of absence.

All the appearances, expressions, and analyses of the self-presencing of awareness, i.e., appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa such as the ground, path and fruit, are bound into a state in which they were experienced as "present right from the moment they appeared. This is like from the moment water appears as the moon, binding that moment without ever experiencing this image as being the moon itself. Also, by having bound the open and luminous awareness that is unimpeded and primordially empty like the sky, one understands the radiance of the unpolluted and un-fabricated range as uncultivated natural luminosity. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:[213]

Hey Great Being! If you desire to attain your own natural mind,
It is attained through an absence of desire, so
Do not attempt to remain within the state of non-conceptual equality![214]
Abide naturally within the domain (*yul*) in which acceptance and rejection are absent!
Abide naturally (*ngang gis*) within the range devoid of fluctuation!
The mind is established as the essence of reality just as it is and
All phenomena are established in and as suchness.
Do not attempt to meddle with reality just as it is!
Do not attempt to achieve something other than this very essence!
[Since it is the nature, do not seek something else!]
If you seek it, you will not discover it outside of the expanse by doing anything (*rgyab pas*).
Since it was already completed (*byas zin*) in the past, there is no need to do anything now.
Since it was already accomplished in the past, there is no need to accomplish anything now.

Do not conceptualize or think about anything at all, but simply rest in a state of equality.

Hey Great Being, listen up!!
Even past Buddhas of the previous generations
Did not search for phenomena/doctrines outside of their own minds.
They never fabricated reality just as it is.
They never cultivated neurotic conceptual depth contemplation.
In fact, it was through *not* analyzing their own natural mind that they attained it—
The one who abides here and now [i.e., Śākyamuni Buddha] and the one who will come in the future [i.e., Maitreya]
Will attain [Buddhahood] by way of the experiential state of non-conceptual balance/stillness.

CONVICTING THE MEANS OF SETTLING ALL PHENOMENA INTO NATURAL ABSENCE ALONG WITH THE MIND OF ASCERTAINING CONSCIOUSNESS AS ABSENCE

FIRST: CONVICTING GRASPING AT EXTREME VIEWS INTO ABSENCE

Convicting [all phenomena] into absence is the actual essence.
Since all phenomena—appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—
Are absent in their nature, they transcend doctrines of "presence."
Since the way in which things appear is unobstructed, they transcend doctrines of "absence."
Since both presence and absence are absent, they transcend doctrines that try to encompass both.
Since "the two" are absent, it transcends doctrines that are neither.
Since they neither are nor are not, the actual enlightened nucleus
Cannot be demonstrated by calling it "this," and it transcends all mental and verbal expression.

Since awareness and all phenomena that appear within the range of that awareness are naturally absent, they are beyond presence. Since they appear in an unobstructed manner,

they are beyond absence. Since neither presence nor absence is established, they are beyond being both. Since not being both is likewise absent, they are beyond the conventional language pertaining to that. Form the very moment everything, howsoever it may be interpreted, appears, the four extreme views simply remain within the depth intention of natural purity/dissipation. It is stated in *The Natural Freedom of Awareness (rig pa rang grol):*

> The stains of the four extreme views are themselves automatically purified.

And it is stated in *The Tantra of the Great Self-Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud):*

> Like ripples in the water or a mirage,
> Things are not just unadorned (*zang ma*) absent, but
> On the other hand, they neither are they present.
> Since they transcends both presence and absence,
> For those endowed with realization, there is an absence of egoic memories (*dran*) in
> the psyche (*yid*).
> The essence of awareness is un-produced.
> The nature of appearance is unobstructed. [67]
> The characteristics of awareness are not concrete objects.
> The fruit of awareness is not fabricated.

PHENOMENA TRANSCEND GRASPING AND FIXATION THROUGH CONVICTING THE ACT OF HOLDING ONTO CHARACTERISTICS AS THE SITE OF COMPASSION

> **Within reality which is primordially pure in that way,**
> **Children who are blind to the significance of the absence of acceptance**
> **and rejection**
> **Are eternally bound through their attachment to their own views.**
> **How afflicted they are by their grasping at the characteristics of**
> **discrimination wisdom!**
> **How deluded they are by their grasping at absence as if it were a**
> **"self"!**

How exhausted they are by grasping at the unbiased state as having positions!
And how worthy of compassion they are since they wander eternally in cyclic existence!

Within the Reality primordially devoid of all activities and free from acceptance and rejection, those who are addicted to the eight lower vehicles and whose eyes for seeing suchness are blinded by their various childish views hold their own respective doctrines as having a solid identity, and hence they are afflicted; due to [asserting] doctrines which grasp at concrete characteristics their distorted intelligence grasps at [philosophical] positions, and hence they are tired out. Due to wandering in the wheel of saṃsāra [created by] the duality of subject and object, they are taught to be objects of compassion. It is stated in *The Spirit Mirror of the All Good (kun du bzang po thugs kyi me long)*:

With respect to the un-produced and self-emergent dissipating and expanding condition of Buddhahood,
You are led astray by trying to meditate on or achieve Buddhahood.

With respect to remaining in the range of non-conceptual enlightenment,
You are led astray by engaging in conditioned roots of virtue.

With respect to the King of Secret Mantra transcending words,
You are led astray by grasping at words and letters.

With respect to the core of the dimension of awareness in which birth and death are absent,
You are led astray by clinging to notions of birth and death.

With respect to the Reality Gestalt free from all thoughts,
You are led astray by the wanderings of various thoughts.

With respect to the wholly luminous Enjoyment Gestalt in which everything remains distinct,
You are led astray by grasping at ignorance/stupidity as [the root of] saṃsāra.

With respect to the Emanation Gestalt that appears in terms that accord with the understanding of sentient beings,
You are led astray by grasping at the forms of transmigrating beings.

With respect to the nature of the seamless unity of the three spiritual gestalts,
You are led astray by seeing the three spiritual gestalts as discrete.

With respect to the unitary nature of the indistinguishable view and meditation,
You are led astray by seeing the view and meditation in terms of multiplicity.

With respect to all phenomena being the nature of the awareness,
You are led astray by seeing phenomena as [ordinary] mind. [68]

The nucleus of enlightenment is devoid of deviations and obscurations—
Where are these deviations and pitfalls to grasp at?
Deviations are absent from the beginning, and obscurations are thoroughly absent.
The Reality Gestalt is free from obscurations—
How afflicted to conceive of it in terms of dualistic notions of deviation and obscuration!
The Reality Gestalt is unproduced and naturally emergent—
How confused it is to hope that it exists otherwise!
Unproduced Awareness is free from thoughts and intentions—
How senseless to attempt to teach it by means of words and letters!
Unobstructed wisdom arises in and of itself—
How miserable is this intellect that is clouded by ignorance!

CONVICTING [REALITY] AS TRANSCENDING THE CAUSAL NETWORKS ARISING FROM VIRTUE AND VICE

The sun of the ultimate self-emergent awareness
Is [equally] obscured by both the white and dark clouds of virtue and vice,
And is afflicted by the lightning of fixating on making efforts in what is to be accepted and rejected.

Due to the continuous rain of the distorted appearances of pleasure and pain,
The seeds of saṃsāra grow into the leaves and petals of the six types of transmigrating beings.
Alas! Take pity on the miserable six types of transmigrators!

In the summertime rain-clouds, lightning and rain obscure the disc of the sun. Similarly, the clouds of virtuous and non-virtuous karma together with the lightning of the stressful activities of acceptance and rejection fall as the rain of different types of pleasure and pain. Hence seeing the sun of the Reality Gestalt's dimension—the self-emergent primordial wisdom—is obscured for ordinary individuals; they eternally wander in saṃsāra and are seen as objects of compassion by yogic adepts who realize suchness. It is stated in *The Sky Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen mkha' la lding)*:[215]

In the absence of a ground, uncontrived and not relying on anything,
Modifying the body and relaxing into luminosity bind one to appearances.

If there is no impartial and unprejudiced mind,
Mental investigation and debate restrain one from experiencing the way things are (*gnas lugs*).

Without the confidence of resting in one's own bed, primordially free and devoid of all activities,
One's heart's desire and temporary meditative experiences prevent one from having realizations.

Without the key point of resting naturally without seeking anything,
Dependence on scriptures concerning cause and effect obscures awareness.

The Great Master Ha-shang [Mahāyāna] has stated [such], and therefore although at that time those with inferior intellects were unable to comprehend it, in fact it is still like that. [69] This is kept secret from those in the lower vehicles because since they are unable to comprehend it, and hence they slander it, at which time, due to that karma, they fall into the unfortunate realms. It is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)*:

> You must not express even the slightest part of these words among Hearers and Solitary Realizers! If you ask why that is, it is because they become nervous and scared, and finally they pass out due to hearing all these words. They have no faith in [doctrines of] Secret Mantra, and having given rise to this frame of mind they experience the great hells of sentient beings due to the ripening of that karma. Therefore, by teaching or even by hearing, no propagation of the view should be expressed at all even in a mere gust of wind."
>
> The Bodhisattva Vajra-Speech asked: "Hey Supramundane Victor! Why do all those Hearers and so forth arise in such a way?"
>
> Then the Totally Positive Samantabhadra answered: "This is because Hearers and Solitary Realizers have not been appropriate candidates for Secret Mantra for innumerable aeons and they are small-minded. It is like, for example, trying to insert a large piece of cloth into the eye of a needle; there is no room for it, and there is no chance for it to go in."

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

> The self-emergent primordial wisdom in which causes and conditions are absent
> Is not to be propounded to beings infatuated with cause and effect; it is extremely esoteric.

ADVICE ON CONVICTING CAUSAL NETWORKS

Within the definitive enlightened nucleus of the final meaning
Just as bonds of gold and bonds of rope are equal inasmuch as they are both fetters,
Religion and non-religion are equal insofar as they are both mental fetters.
Just as masses of black or white clouds conceal equally,
Both virtue and vice are equal insofar as they both conceal awareness.
Therefore, the yogic adept who realizes just this
Esteems transcendence of all causal networks arising from virtue and vice.

Within the dimension of awareness [everything] disappears into the naked and unimpeded Reality Gestalt. For instance, the core of the sun cannot be covered by anyone, is completely beyond description, and transcends everything but all grasping, addiction, and stressful activities in terms of religious doctrines are equal in terms of being obstructions and fetters [to awareness], and therefore there is no difference [between spiritual materialism and ordinary materialism]. Just like both white clouds and black clouds can obscure [the sun], and both golden bonds and rope bonds can restrain. [70] Accordingly, it is stated in *The Teaching Inscribed with Precious Copper Letters (rin po che zangs kyi yig can):*

> Golden bonds and rope bonds are equal in terms of binding.

It is stated in *The Heart Mirror of Vajrasattva (rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long):*

> All the phenomena/doctrines of awareness should be understood as being free from intellectualism that conceives things in terms of a concretely existing 'self.' Similarly, you must bring this understanding to bear on the fact that all phenomena are unceasing. Then bring this understanding of unobstructed phenomena to bear on that they appear in any way at all. Then bring the understanding of whatever appears to bear on the fact that these appearances are unproduced. Then bring the understanding of the unproduced to bear on the fact that they are devoid of coming and going. Then bring the understanding of this lack of coming and going to bear on the fact that they are non-dual. Then bring the understanding of this non-duality to bear on the great freedom from extreme [views]. Similarly, bring this understanding to bear on the fact that all phenomena are beyond conceptuality. Finally, you must bring this understanding of all phenomena into a luminous and undistracted state.

CONVICTING THE MEANING OF THE ENLIGHTENED NUCLEUS

The self-emergent primordial wisdom shines forth from within,
The darkness which characterizes cause and effect dissipates, and
The masses of clouds of virtue and vice are completely absent. Hence,
Within Reality's Expanse—the ultimate the sky—the sun [of awareness] dawns.

This is the conviction of the ultimate meaning.

It is settled by means of the ten natures of absence.

It surpasses all the vehicles based on cause and effect.

The self-emergent Reality Gestalt arrays in the manner of space, whereupon the phenomena/doctrines of cause and effect, which are like the black darkness of night, automatically/naturally dissipate, the phenomena/doctrines of [ethical norms] of virtue and vice, which are like masses of clouds, naturally fall away. When this happens, the sun [of awareness], which is the enlightened nucleus of radiant light, dawns within the actual sky of Reality's Expanse—this is Reality itself. The ten natures of absence manifestly radiate outwards, and hence it is like the analogy of the sun dawning within the ordinary clear sky. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:[216]

This enlightening mind, the enlightened nucleus of everything,
Is by nature primordially and spontaneously present, and thus
There is no need for striving or accomplishing by way of the ten natures.
The analogy for my own nature in its entirety is like space.
Within pure space, no one strives at all—
Within pure space, there is nothing to be sought.
Space, where everything is created, is beyond all striving and achievement. [71]
So it is as well with the all-accomplishing enlightened nucleus, the enlightening mind.
Because I am completely beyond scope of cognitive processing,
In me views are absent and meditation is also absent from the very beginning.
Similarly, transcendence even by means of those ten natures
Does not work in relation to me.
People possessing vehicles focusing on cause and effect
Who wish to see me and to see my nature,
Will fall when they proceed by way of the ten natures,
Just as when you try to walk in space, you fall to the ground,

The non-manifest depth contemplation transcends the domain of meditation.
This transparent intrinsic intelligence, free from mental elaboration,
Is the conviction in which all phenomena are consumed or fulfilled (*zad pa*).
Phenomena are fulfilled in this, and here also it is fulfilled in and as phenomena.
Since this conviction occurs in a space in which fulfillment is always already absent,
It is decisively settled as being devoid of names, beyond any demonstration or expression.
As such, it has no special aim (*gtad med*), but pervades [all] directions, and is extremely wide open.
How delightful is the yoga in which phenomena are fulfilled/exhausted and which transcends the intellect!
Just this is the yoga of the past, present and future and
Is the singular expanse of the deep intention [of the Buddhas]—the reality in which gaps/fissures are absent.
Awareness-Holders and all the Conquerors are identical in their experiential dimensions.

This very naked awareness in which all phenomena are consumed is the deep intention of the Reality Gestalt—your own bed—the exhaustion/fulfillment of all phenomena, the great original purity in which phenomena are consumed/fulfilled. Hence, all phenomena are also finally exhausted in this [awareness]. Even this is exhausted in and as the name "phenomena," whereupon it is un-mistakenly realized (*phu thag chod pa*) as transcending illustration and expression. Therefore, the thoroughly free and unfocused (*gtad med*) wisdom energy of yogic adepts who realizes just this is identical with the Buddhas of the three times, i.e., past, [present] and future, and all yogic adepts and the expanse of realization[217] are identical. Hence, by dawning in this naturally free unrestricted way, devoid of polarizations, it is said that [the yogic adept's] mind increases into an intensely pleasurable bliss. As for the uncultivated realization of

this dimension just as it is, it is stated in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

> You will not see the dimension of Reality through meditation and contemplation.
> The naturally appearing depth contemplation is free from mental polarizations.
> Free from mental elaborations, Reality is equal to the limits of space. [72]
> There is neither grasping at nor conceptualizing these imagined objects.
> Buddhahood, free from the four extreme [views], is intrinsic intelligence.
> The Reality Gestalt transcends the extremes of presence and absence.
> The singular awakening cannot be quantified,
> The Reality Gestalt is devoid of the grasping at the duality of 'is' and 'is not,' and
> The easy gentle force of intrinsic intelligence is beyond grasping and conceptuality.

As for [the way in which awareness] manifests as this comfortable pleasant state through the realization of just that, it is stated in *The Great Array of Refined Gems Tantra (nor bu 'phra bkod chen po'i rgyud):*

> The great maṇḍala is free from thought and unimaginable—
> How blissful is the mind that realizes the meaning of the Great Perfection!

CONVICTING PHENOMENA IN AND AS THE GREAT EMPTINESS THAT CANNOT BE CHARACTERIZED

The immutable, firm and uncompounded openness;
The openness in which the self-emergent primordial wisdom
transcends striving and accomplishment;
The openness in which all things (*chos kun*) are mere designations and
transcend linguistic and conceptual expression;
Within the very range of the All Good (*samantabhadra*), which is free
from activities,
Whatever appears is the expanse of the All Good.
Within the expanse of the All Good appearances are empty and good
and evil are absent.

Through holding absence to be presence, you mistakenly assign [names to objects], but
From the moment you name them, they are already devoid of distortion or non-distortion.
Convicting phenomena into a great state in which names are absent,
Is the Abiding Reality of the natural Great Perfection.

Awareness' own face is devoid of transition and transformation. In it exertion and accomplishment are absent It transcends mental and linguistic expression and divorced from activities. It is undifferentiated and is the nature of the Totally Positive Samantabhadra. Whatever appears within that range such as good and evil, etc., from the very moment it appears is in fact absent, and hence is a mere arbitrary designation. Moreover, when you exert yourself in the examination of these arbitrary designations, you convict them in and as Reality devoid of mental and linguistic expression, a pure state in which all names are absent. It is stated in *The Spirit Mirror of the All Good (kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long):*

Within the very pure and un-obscured space of pervasive enlightenment
Since an object of obscuration is not observed, the agent of obscuration does not need to be refuted.
Since there is no Buddhahood, even the term "Buddha" is absent.
Since there is no grasping, even the term "sentient being" is absent.
Since there is no conceptuality, even the term "distortion" is absent.
Since there is no addiction, even the terms "emotions' and "mind" are absent.
Since there is no attachment, even the term "mental predispositions" are absent. [73]
Since there is no past, even the term "future" is absent.
Since there is no present, even the term "afflictive emotions" is absent.
Since there is no ultimate, even the term "conventional" is absent.
Since there is no awareness, even the term "ignorance" is absent.
Since there is no Buddha, even the term "sentient being´is absent.
Since there is no teaching, even the term "teacher" is absent.

A SUMMARY OF ALL THESE POINTS

In this way, you resolve that phenomena of appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa
Are devoid of distortion and non-distortion, and hence
You will never attain nirvāṇa through forsaking saṃsāra.
By resolving that [such phenomena] are devoid of both production and non-production,
You transcend domains (*yul*) of grasping at production and cessation, presence and absence.[218]
By deciding that phenomena are devoid of purity and non-purity,
Without acceptance or rejection, which are based on concepts of good and evil, you become balanced (*phyam*), whereupon
You convict[219] **all phenomena into the totally positive openness.**

Since there is nothing at all that is established as the essence of all phenomena, it is beyond distortion and non-distortion. Since it transcends those, it is also beyond notions of avoidance and acceptance based on a belief in the concrete existence of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Since it [i.e., (non-existent) the essence of all phenomena] is beyond production and non-production, it is also beyond the grasping at imaginary production and cessation. Since it transcends purity and impurity, it is beyond acceptance and rejection based on ethical standards of good and evil. [The essence of all phenomena] is convicted in and as the ground in which all phenomena are consumed/fulfilled—the deep intention of the Totally Positive Samantabhadra, whereupon it (you) abide in the actual nucleus of absence. From among all phenomena/doctrines of cause and effect such as virtue and vice, all phenomena and non-phenomena are primordially equalized and convicted into empty and non-concrete awareness. It is stated in *The Tantra Without Letters (yi ge med pa'i rgyud):*

> From the point of view of self-emergent primordial wisdom, objects to be examined are absent. They were absent in the past, they will be absent in the future, and at present appearances are completely absent. Karma is absent; karmic predispositions are absent. Ignorance ("dimmed awareness") is absent. Mind is absent. Mentation is absent. Wisdom is absent. Saṃsāra is absent; nirvāṇa is absent. even awareness itself is absent! In awareness appearances are completely absent. Alas! In self-

emergent primordial wisdom even life is absent, and therefore it transcends the extremes of virtue and vice. Since it is devoid of agent and action, [74] it transcends external objects and internal mind.

CONCLUDING VERSE TO THE FIRST CHAPTER

The absence of appearances of the varieties of phenomena that is the range of awareness
Is purified in and as the absence of virtue and vice and the attendant notions of cause and effect. Therefore,
Striving and exertion being absent, it is the space-like dimension.
All this has been explained in the commentary (*'brel*) on the precious first topic of absence.
Extremely intelligent beings endowed with supreme good fortune,
Scholars endowed with much hearing and who have studied well,
Ordinary and divine practitioners who hold the awareness mantra, and
Assembled oceans of vow-holders should all rejoice!

THE SECOND ADAMANTINE TOPIC: INDICATING THAT ALL PHENOMENA ARE DEVOID OF PARTIALITY AND PREJUDICE: ASCERTAINING THE NATURE OF SIMPLICITY.

BRIEF INDICATION OF THE FIRST [I.E., INDICTMENT].

> **Having realized well the abiding reality of absence in this way,**
> **You should come to a decision on the nature of simplicity. As for this,**
> **The precepts of Ati-Yoga, the pinnacle of the vehicles,**
> **Like the sky, have no center and no limits.**
> **The vast enlightened mind of the All Good, the greatest of the great,**
> **Is the nature of the great continuous balance (*mnyam pa*).**

As for the empty and luminous awareness devoid of center or margins, it is called the great Reality Gestalt that is continuous simplicity, the Ati-Yoga, the vast Enlightened Mind of the All Good which is like space that is neither fragmented nor polarized, inexpressible and beyond the intellect. It is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

> I—the All Good—teach that
> Within the inexpressible mind-as-such
> Words appear, but divorced from the four continents [i.e., this world]. Thus
> It is said that, "this is beyond the domain of words and thoughts."

And it is further stated in *The Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol):*

> The precepts of Ati-Yoga, the highest pinnacle of all the spiritual vehicles,
> Is the peak of everything like the King of Mountains.
> The greatest of the great, it is wide open heart of the All Good (Samantabhadra).
> Through its natural force, it overcomes the eight[220] vehicles.
> Similarly, the natural force of awareness is the openness of equality.
> Within this singular great openness there is great equanimity, [75]
> The dualities of realization and non-realization or freedom and lack of freedom are absent.

The phenomena of appearances and their fictive interpretations, and the non-manifest enlightening mind
Do not waver from being simply what is, free from elaborations, and thus
You cannot observe any limit or center in it, and it is divorced from conceptual thought.
You remain in the great continuous nature of simplicity.

All phenomena are the natural lighting up of awareness, and due to that their essence lacks fragmentation and polarization, and hence this is called the Ground-Simplicity. Since the intellect does not think or grasp at objects of observation, it is called the Path-Simplicity. Since it lacks optimism and pessimism (*re dogs*) and transition and transformation, it is called the Fruit-Simplicity. Since appearances never waver from awareness, it is called the Expanse-Simplicity. Even the essence of the enlightening mind, i.e., awareness, primordially rests in the continuous simplicity of wide-open freedom, and that itself is called the "Unwavering Reality" (*ma g.yos pa'i chos nyid*). Concerning that, it is stated in *The Surpassing the Six Collections of Consciousness (tshogs drug zil gnon):*

Mastering saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and all the spiritual vehicles,
The unitary state in which activities are absent overcomes everything with its splendor.
There are no other separate objects that become extremes.
You never waver (*gar ma g.yos*) from the unified openness that requires no cleansing,
The very space of the All Good, free from activities.

THE SPACE-LIKE SIMPLICITY IN WHICH DIVIONS INTO SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS ARE ABSENT

Since phenomena such as objects and appearances lack partiality and concrete existence
From the very moment they appear, they are [already] simplified.

Since the mind of intrinsic intelligence does not differentiate between past and future,
It is simplicity itself,[221] like space, just as it is.
After the past has ceased and before the future has been produced,
The range of the Enlightening Mind, without abiding in the present,
Has no actual basis or foundation, and is beyond being an object that can be illustrated.
Natural simplicity and balance is a vast [empty] circle of space.

Objects, mind, and the ground for these two, i.e., awareness, are all three simplicity itself, and due to that all the appearances of external objects are naturally empty forms lacking atoms or discernible parts, and are devoid of partiality and concrete existence. These appearances fall away into the emptiness of the three times, and hence they are the Essence-Simplicity. Since appearances are unobstructed, being immeasurable, they are inconceivable, and hence they are simplicity. However the mind manifests, it lacks momentary existence, and even this is itself empty, [76] and hence it is simplicity. Since the unobstructed playfulness of awareness manifests as a variety of phenomena, it is simplicity. Since the luminous and empty awareness is without a center or margins, it is simplicity. Since the singular expanse that is the universal source is un-fragmented/impartial, it is simplicity. Within the Buddhahood of the primordial dimension, which is the natural essence devoid of dualistic patterns of subject and object, objects and minds, dazzling by their nature, appear in their own natural luminosity. All objects are empty forms, and all minds are the natural manifestation [of awareness]—neither ever passes beyond empty awareness, i.e., the self-emergent primordial wisdom. It is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

Since the teaching of the viewless view
Is a view without any particular focus (*gza' gtad*), and
Since it is unimpeded primordial wisdom without any concrete existence,
The primordial intelligence of the intrinsic intelligence is spontaneously present.
Since there is nothing other than that,
Anything within the primordial wisdom of the individual intrinsic intelligence
Is the exterior radiance of the great primordial wisdom.

Primodiality itself is the Victorious Vajradhara.
Therefore, within the Ground, perfect and complete Buddhahood
Is devoid of objective spheres, and dualistic notions of subject and object completely fall away.
The naturally pure sky
Is pervaded by the actual sky of Reality.
Within the actual sky of Reality
The sun of primordial cognition of intrinsic intelligence dawns,
Illuminating the universe without polarizations or fragmentations (i.e., prejudice and partiality).

THE SIMPLICITY IN WHICH DUALISTIC CONCEPTIONS OF ACTIVITY AND EXERTION ARE ABSENT

Within the actual enlightened nucleus in which polarization and fragmentation (*phyogs ris*) are absent,
There are no philosophical views, tantric empowerments, maṇḍalas, or recitation of mantras.
You cannot observe any successful training or progress achieved by way of spiritual grounds and paths or vows, and hence
You are simplified into the intensely vast groundlessness, whereupon
You are absorbed (*'ub*) and perfected (*chub*) within reality—the enlightening mind.[222]

Within the essence of awareness there is absolutely no view, empowerment, maṇḍala, mantra, spiritual level, path or vow at all. Therefore, the words that teach all these things and the pursuit of various activities associated with them are meaningless. This is because simplicity, the pure wisdom energy that lacks all activities, in reality transcends all benefit and harm. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Hey Great Spiritual Hero!
This nature of mine is difficult to comprehend, and therefore
There are eight aspects: access, views, pledges,

Enlightened activities, paths along which one progresses, abode,
Primordial wisdom and reality.
These are the three spiritual gestalts and the five vehicles.
My view and conduct are incompatible with these other vehicles and their views and conduct.
Regarding access, [in the Great Perfection] [77] you must enter through the door of non-pursuit.
I have taught that the view does not need to be cultivated.
I have taught that vows do not need to be guarded.
I have taught that enlightened actions do not need to be sought after.
I have taught that the path does not need to be traversed.
I have taught that you do not need to be connected to an abode.
Primordial wisdom is non-conceptual and does not vacillate,
And Reality is completely uncontrived just as it is.

SPONTANEOUS PRESENCE IS NATURALLY PURE SIMPLICITY

Whatever phenomena may appear,
Lacking natural or inherent production, are already soaked (*brlabs*) with splendor (*byin*), and hence,
Not abiding and lacking cessation, they are spontaneously present.
Free from conceptual thoughts of imagined presence or absence, they [i.e., all phenomena] are completely pure and hence,
They are simplified within the Great Perfection of reality.

All appearances of empty awareness are primordially un-produced. Hence, just like the [reflection of the] moon in water, the abode is primordially saturated with the blessings of the un-produced, like water being pervaded by moisture. Even though [all appearances] shine as the unobstructed self-presencing [of awareness], their natural essence resides in complete purity. This is simplified into the Great Perfection of Reality. The simultaneity of appearances and emptiness is spontaneously present within the range of the enlightening mind. Regarding that, it is stated in *The Three Times in One Stroke (dus gsum chig chod):*

Although everything is condensed into one, it is the unitary expanse.
Singular and un-produced, it is the unborn expanse.
In the unborn expanse the miraculous apparitions of production
Are not fragmented at all, and are completely indeterminate.

THE GREAT NATURALLY LUMINOUS SIMPLICITY

Within ultimate awareness, the nucleus of enlightenment,
No spatial or conceptual positions are visible and it is free from partiality [arising from grasping] characteristics.
It cannot be delineated by way of terms or valid cognition.
It defies description, and in it permanence and annihilation, increase and decrease, and coming and going are absent.
Being an intensely vast and spontaneous state of balance (*mnyam*), it is completely pure, and hence,
It is continuous simplicity, free from all polarizations and fragmentation.

Awareness' own essence has no concrete existences or characteristics, and therefore is not established in terms of partiality and prejudice. Since it is free from the elaborations of mental and linguistic expression, you will not realize it through terms or [so-called] valid cognition. Since you do not [stress out trying to] identify the essence [of awareness], you are simplified into a condition free from depiction and devoid of eternity and annihilation, increase and decrease, and coming and going. The naturally dazzling playfulness of the All Good dawns without polarizations within the range of awareness, [78] and whatever manifests does not pass beyond the range of awareness. Appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa spiralling within the vagina of the All Good Mother. Therefore, it [i.e., whatever appears] is simplified within the singular range of the great seminal nucleus. Regarding that, it is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

Within the unimpeded primordially pure intrinsic intelligence that lacks concrete existence,
Material things and characteristics are purified from the beginning.

The face of the All Good sees in all ten directions, and
In the singular blissful openness of the Mother's vagina spirals
All the three realms without exception—it is the range of the organizing seminal nucleus.

THE GREAT NATURALLY DAWNING SIMPLICITY

Since the wisdom energy (*dgongs pa*) of the Buddhas emerges and operates without hope or fear,
Whatever manifests is continuous simplicity.
There is never any need to confine its impartial, transparent, and carefree natural manifestations
Within the cage of reification (*'dzin pa*).

Whatever appears does so from the range of awareness in and as its own dynamism and playfulness, like water and waves. The fluctuations (*'phyo ba*) within awareness' natural brilliance is like the fish of the ocean not being able to go beyond the ocean. Without viewing these as separate, engaging this movement [of awareness] is called the "continuous simplicity of manifestation and dissolution." It is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

The mental conceptions' wriggles
Within the ocean of the self-emergent primordial wisdom
[Are like] the wriggles of the golden fish in the ocean.

And it is further stated in *The Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug phrad):*

Whatever you think, you think within the range of natural awareness.
Whatever you realize, you realize within the range of natural awareness.
Within the enlightening mind thoughts and conceptuality are absent from the beginning.
The enlightened mind of the conquerors of the three times is separated from such thoughts and conceptuality.

FULFILLMENT—THE MEANING OF SIMPLICITY

Since everything is completely reversed within the range of simplicity,
The nature [of awareness] transcends the mental boundaries of proofs and refutations..[223]
Just as the worldly environment and the beings therein become empty in the range of the sky,
Proofs and refutations [based on emotions of] attachment and anger vanish (*yal*) into the primordial expanse.
The collection of afflicted conceptions that have not reached this leave no trace, and
When you simplify them into the range of the uninterrupted [flow of] awareness,
They pass beyond the limits of optimistic or pessimistic grasping.
The tethering stake (*brtod phur*) of subject-object dualities is removed—
The city of saṃsāra based on distorted appearances is always already empty.

Just as clouds emerge from the range of the sky [79] and vanish into that range, all phenomena also initially emerge from reality's expanse, and finally dissolve into that same expanse. Having realized this, all minds and mental factors such as proofs and refutations based on attachment and anger revert (*go bzlog*) to the empty seminal nucleus, the primordial source. Hence, the mind and saṃsāric distortions dissipate into primordial purity. The esoteric quintessential instruction of this is the very abiding in the naturally empty and un-fragmented simplicity. Concerning that, it is stated in *The Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol):*

Since causes and reasons inevitably revert to the singular organizing seminal nucleus,
Fears and hopes with respect to the fruit [of Buddhahood] are eliminated, and it becomes equal to the extent of the sky.
Vast and huge—the enlightened mind of the Conqueror is equal to the sky.

Devoid of avoidance and attainment—it is the openness of the singular seminal nucleus.
Released into its own place—both realization and non-realization are absent.

A SUMMARY [OF INDICTMENT OF ALL PHENOMENA IN AND AS SIMPLICITY]

Therefore, the manner in which phenomena appear as external objects and
The manner in which one's own internal mind manifests are the playful dynamics of awareness.
Whoever recognizes that everything is simplicity and primordially empty
Indicts all phenomena into the vital point of simplicity.

All phenomena never go beyond either awareness or the dynamism of awareness. Awareness' own face is devoid of thoughts, expressions and elaborations and it is the source of all phenomena. Therefore, it is simplified into the absence of fragmentation and polarizations. With respect to the dynamics of awareness, by grasping at the exterior radiance of all appearances of external objects as having an ontic identity, [awareness' dynamism] manifests just like when a woman whom you have seen before appears in a dream, and all the minds and mental factors that grasp at the eight interior collections of consciousness manifest through grasping at the unobstructed gateway for the opening of resonating concern (*thugs rje*) as having some concrete status. Everything that appears in terms of separate subject and object emerges from the dynamism of awareness as the ornamentation and playfulness of awareness; in fact, even all these things are empty forms of vividly appearing absence which are not established at all as internal or external objects and, by simplifying them in and as phenomena of absence, you realize their final nature. Through this realization, without directly abandoning them, they are released into their natural abodes just like the appearances of a dream or an illusion. It is stated in *The Sky Going Great Khyung (khyung chen mkha' la lding):*

Concerning the mind-as-such in which polarizations are primordially absent,
Saṃsāra and the unhappy transmigrations appear [truly] established to everyone,
But in truth they do not, like a dream, an illusion, or like the City of Scent-Eaters.

Such false appearances are impossible in terms of truth's dynamic potential. [80]

ARRESTING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO A STATE OF SIMPLICITY

ARRESTING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO PURITY, THE ABSENCE OF SUBJECT-OBJECT DUALITY, INTO THE ALL GOOD, I.E., THE NEXUS OF SIMPLICITY

Reality and objects are arrested
Into the primordial wisdom of simplicity, the luminously empty inherent intelligence.
It cannot be constrained by [subjective] grasping; it transcends being an object of apprehension.
In the absence of phenomena on which you must focus (*gtad*) your attention (*dmigs*), you suddenly (*har*) become awakened (*sangs rgya*) freely and easily (*yan pa*).
The undistracted wisdom energy/intention in which ego-driven memories are exhausted
Is simplicity like the sky, devoid of both meditation and non-meditation.
This is the immense open space of the Totally Positive Samantabhadra's depth intentionality.

However consciousnesses arise in relation to appearances, they are released into the clear and lucid unrestricted natural nakedness without prolonging the fluctuations of ego-driven memories and emotions. That [releasing] arrests [all phenomena] into the depth intention of the All Good—i.e., continuous simplicity. Concerning this, it is stated in *The Sky Going Great Khyung (khyung chen mkha' la lding)*:[224]

Released into nakedness, naturally pure, free from extremes and perfectly complete,
Free from extremes, it naturally eliminates[225] the two hindrances,[226] and hence
It is the crux of the great unsought for immense open space that is free from all activities.

Your body and speech are bound between appearances and emptiness without doing anything.

ARRESTING THE UNRESTRICTED SIX COLLECTIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS INTO A RELAXED STATE

In this vast and immense open space of luminous empty awareness,
Whatever various distinguishing characteristics may manifest without impediment
Are nakedly seen by the senses and illumine the reality of awareness.
Appearances are relaxed and unrestricted, and whatever consciousness occurs is easy and comfortable.
The six collections of consciousness are loose and easy, and primordial wisdom shines outwards of its own accord. This openness
Is unimpeded and radiates as light within the absence of interior and exterior. Therefore,
It is spontaneously present in and as the great letting go into an uncontrived pristine state.

Within the range of the luminous empty awareness, at the time of being simplified or released into the great naturally luminous absence of grasping, external appearances that are unrestricted and naturally luminous manifest as the appearing objects of the loose and easy (*lhug pa*) six collections of consciousness, but they are not established as objects of apprehension. Such appearances are equalized and simplified. Within the un-produced space of awareness, the unobstructed light, i.e., the radiant light without interior, exterior, or intermediate parts, rests in an uncontrived pristine state. Within that great condition it is as if an image manifests on the calm and clear surface of the ocean. Regarding this, it is stated in *The Tantra Without Letters (yi ge med pa'i rgyud)*:

As for the wisdom energy of the oceanic letting go,
It is not appearance, nor does it cause things to appear.
It is not emptiness, nor is it something that exists as being empty.
It is not [mere] luminosity, [81] it is the sphere of intense radiance.

It is not drowsiness, and it is intrinsically devoid of lethargy.
It never wavered in the past, it is not wavering now, and it will not waver in the future.
It was never agitated in the past, it is not agitated now—it is beyond all agitation.
It does not arise due to having been made, it relies on the great means of letting go.
It neither emanates nor recollects—it is the range of the singular letting go;
It is not a place—you can never go beyond that.
With respect to the ocean-like esoteric primordial wisdom,
You should place yourself within the primordially spontaneous, infinite and produced expanse.
In the huge ocean the depths of which are difficult to fathom,
Keep your eyes on the tip of the unsinkable Victory-Banner!
The great un-fabricated Gestalt (*sku*) in which the [ordinary] mind of the enlightened nucleus is absent
Is not created, and hence it is victorious over all creators—
It is letting go itself, primordially un-fabricated and not something to be thrown away.
It is not changed by appearances, nor is it fabricated by the intellect.
When you rest in the sky of reality, such is indicated as the wisdom energy.

ARRESTING CONSCIOUSNESS INTO THE GREAT NATURALLY FLOWING SIMPLICITY

Cognition that is loose and natural is like a person who has nothing to do—
Tight concentration and overly lax repose being absent, the mind and body are completely released into a joyous pleasant state.
The simplicity of awareness is like the pure intermediate space—
It abides as a seamless unity within the range of reality.

Just like an old man who has finished his work, since he feels content, his body and speech also become comfortable and his mind relaxes into a naturally flowing state. Hence [external] objects and [internal] minds are released into non-duality, whereupon you naturally rest within the

luminously empty awareness—the simplicity of the Reality Gestalt. As for that it is stated in *Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug phrad):*

> The enlightening mind is the actual basis for everything.
> Whatever various unobstructed characteristics may manifest
> Are seen nakedly by the senses—whatever appears illuminates reality.
> Unrestricted appearance is the awareness' own blissful gateway.
> The six spiritual gestalts are the space where unimpeded primordial wisdom does its natural manifestation thing.
> Un-obscured, lacking interior and exterior, the light of primordial wisdom radiates outwards, and therefore
> Intrinsic awareness is the expanse of reality where the mirror of the mind-as-such self-presences.
> In the range of this self-presencing awareness, distraction and non-distraction are absent, and
> Just being in the uncontrived pristine state, your body and mind are released into a state of easy relaxation.
> Cognition that is loose and natural is like a person who has nothing to do—
> Since tight concentration and overly lax repose are absent, the mind and body are completely released into a joyous pleasant state.

THE MEASURE OF REALIZATION THATCOMES FROM THE CONFIDENCE INSTILLED BY THE DEPTH INTENTION

In the sky-like realization of the radiantly empty reality,
Awareness that loosens the nets [of fictitious being] [82] is continuous simplicity.
It is not bound by grasping and transcends all ego-driven memories and thoughts.
Everything becomes balanced and simplified and spins itself out within the singular openness of the depth intention.
The mixture of the blissful range of the ground and the relaxed happy mind of the yogic adept

Is the range of the enlightening mind in which external appearances and interior consciousnesses are the same flavor
Where you see the abiding reality—the reality in which all phenomena are exhausted.

Although [awareness] appearing as external objects, since they cannot be caught in the cage of analytical thought, objects of apprehension are purified. Although [awareness] manifests as the internal mind, since you do not have to purposely eliminate (*ched du ma bcad pa*) it, the apprehending mind is purified. Being simplified without being forced to choose between appearances and mind, you are suddenly awakened (*har sangs*) into continuous simplicity. The ground—i.e., reality which is one's own bed—and the intensely blissful awareness that is the mind's natural resting within great bliss are mixed and integrated, and that is set within the abiding reality—the reality in which all phenomena are always already completed or fulfilled. Therefore, through always taking hold of the eternal sphere of bliss, the yogic visionary who is confident vis-à-vis the abiding reality has the realization of directly seeing the truth of reality that is said to "shine from within." It is stated in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

> As for the dimension of self-emergent intense bliss that is devoid of grasping conceptuality
> When you see the true Buddha, you become a child of the Conqueror.
> When you internalize this realization, you are always happy and relaxed;
> When the elements arise as your pals, appearances are purified.

SUMMARY OF THE MEANING [OF ARRESTING INTO SIMPLICITY]

At the very moment you imagine (*yid la byed*) [the dichotomy between] objects and your senses
Your own mind is already simplicity and perceptions are wide-open bliss.
They are not bound by intellectual grasping—within their natural radiance and luminosity
They are arrested into the great nexus of continuous simplicity.

In brief, at the precise moment that objects appear, sense consciousnesses immediately manifest. At that time, not being bound by any special grasping and without being becoming distracted into the brilliant range of natural luminosity, you take care of the [ensuing] wide-open bliss. This is called "Arresting [all phenomena] into simplicity" because you are released from prejudiced grasping brought about by focusing on specific tasks. It is stated in *The Sky Going Great Khyung (khyung chen mkha' la lding)*:

> The three types of encounter[227] are the critical juncture (*'gag*) of playfulness in and as objects—
> Whatever [interpreted appearance] dawns is not avoided (*spangs*), but is arrested within the interstices between the [external] object and the [internal] mind.

THE INCARCERATION OF SIMPLICITY

SIMPLICITY: THE PRIMORDIAL SEAL OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE EXPANSE

> **Within the sky in which grasping at external objects and internal minds dissipates,**
> **Awareness completely separate from the struggles of ego-driven memory and conceptuality [83]**
> **Is fettered into the shackles of self-radiant simplicity.**
> **This "vajra dance" is the unrestricted and continuous reality.**
> **The expanse of suchness, the primordial wisdom of equality,**
> **It is the natural seal of the All Good's primordial intention.**

Within the range of the sky-like continuum of awareness, whatever external objects or internal minds that may manifest are tied up with the indestructible bonds of the unborn, and therefore, whatever external appearances and internal cognitions may dawn are realized to be the dynamism and the playfulness of awareness. Then, having nothing to renounce and nothing to take up, you freely engage/operate [reality] in the great and vast open space, and are bound thereby. This is the vajra-bond, and right from the moment of manifestation it is nothing other than the dawning of awareness within the range of awareness. Awareness is said to be "The Victory Banner of the never-setting sun of adamantine primordial wisdom." It is stated in The Great Fulfillment of *The Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud)*:

E Ma Ho!

The adamantine primordial wisdom of the intrinsic intelligence blazes throughout the universe!

The self-presencing Vajra devoid of characteristics blazes everywhere![228]

The Vajra of blazing fearlessness is the great emptiness!

The stainless subtle and coarse Vajras are thoroughly blazing!

The all-pervading emptiness is the great indestructible Vajra-Crown (*rdo rje cod pan*)!

The limitless Vajras are fulfilled by their nature without being needing to be granted;

The limitless Vajras are the pledges that do not need to be protected.

THE GENERAL BONDS OF THE ENLIGHTENING MIND

Just as your various dreams that are bound by sleep

Are not really true and are your own empty projections,

The phenomena of the entire animate and inanimate worlds of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, are bound by the mind-as-such.

They appear within the [enlightening] mind, the great openness of awareness; they lack concrete existence.

Just as whatever appearances may manifest in a dream are bound within the range of sleep and [in fact] are untrue and your own empty self-projections, all phenomena which appear in terms of the worldly environment and beings therein or as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are bound by awareness, i.e., the enlightening mind, and since they appear as mind, they are all radiant appearances of absence, and should be recognized as the playfulness of awareness. In *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)* it is stated:[229]

Since I—universal enlightened creativity—created

The entire collection of appearances and their interpretations as the environment and the being therein and

The entire collection of Buddhas and sentient beings,

Everything is nothing other than the enlightening mind.

There is nothing other than this and since activities are absent from the beginning and
Also since everything is taught to be the enlightening mind, [84]
I teach that this is the particular purpose of the original meaning/dimension.

THE NATURAL BONDS OF SIMPLICITY

The entire vast animate and inanimate world within the openness of the sky
Is *continuous simplicity* in which center and margins are absent. Similarly,
All minds and appearances within the openness of awareness
Are bound within the empty self-presencing of awareness in which interior and exterior are simplified and balanced (*phyal ba*).
As for this, all phenomena are the bonds of the enlightening mind;
They are taught to be impartial/un-fragmented simplicity that is completely separate from dualistic structures of subject and object.

The entire worldly environment as vast as it is, along with the limitless and incalculable sentient beings of the six realms of transmigration are bound in the space of a single immense sky. Similarly, even the inconceivable phenomena of appearances that are interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are bound by awareness—the great original purity. Therefore, you must realize these to be nothing other than the lighting up as empty appearances, absent in the face of awareness. Concerning this, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

All apparent phenomena and
Your own mind are the same reality from the very beginning. Therefore,
Do not attempt to understand this according to the system of cause and effect!
Within the suchness of your own mind,
The essence of your own pure and total presence lights up as the object to be analyzed.

And:

The great openness is the immense sphere of the mind, and so

There is not even one thing that does not dwell within that!

The essence of all phenomena, which are the self-presencing of awareness, is the range of emptiness, the empty mind-as-such. Being empty, is a single type. Therefore, it is "bound into the singular expanse by the great emptiness."

THE BONDS OF AWARENESS FREE FROM THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

Even that enlightening mind that binds all phenomena
Is itself bound by the great simplicity in which polarizations and fragmentation are absent;
Like the sky that binds the environment and the beings therein,
It is devoid of center and margins, and is beyond all thought and expression.

All phenomena is bound by awareness, and [even] ignorance is bound by the un-fragmented and non-polarized continuous simplicity that is beyond mental and linguistic expression; completely pure simplicity is taught to be in the nature of the sky. As for that, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

All phenomena have the essential characteristic of the sky;
The essential characteristic of the sky is suchness;
The three spiritual gestalts of the Buddhas abide in accordance with that essential characteristic; [85]
Everything abides in suchness;
All phenomena, however they may appear,
Are not fabricated out of anything at all.

THE BONDS OF AWARENESS—THE UNIVERSAL SOURCE

Within the awareness of the great equality free from polarized positions,
Phenomena, which are appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, dawn without obstruction.

From the very moment they dawn, everything—minds and phenomena—
Cannot be described by saying "This," and are bound by the simplicity of reality.

All phenomena—appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—dawn from within awareness, appear within awareness, and return into awareness, and therefore they are bound by awareness. Phenomena, and even awareness itself, are bound by the simplicity of reality that transcends description and expression, and hence they are natural purity itself. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Therefore all appearances and their fictive interpretations, i.e., the environment and the beings therein,
Never do not abide in the range of the sky, and accordingly
Since the openness of the enlightening mind is greater than any objective domain,
All Buddhas, sentient beings, the environment and the beings therein also abide within that.
Within reality in which everything is completely pure,
There is no duality, it is free from all reductive strategies of reification and negation.

SUMMARY OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BONDS OF THE ALL GOOD (SAMANTABHADRA)

No one at all can escape (*'dar med*)—they are primordially trapped within the net of the enlightening mind
By the immense and wide open space of the All Good;
They are bound by the deep intention of the Guru who is the Protector of Transmigrators and the Lord of the Doctrine.
They are determined by the natural extent of the primordially pure indestructible enlightened nucleus.
Except for those extremely intelligent ones who possess great fortune,
It is difficult to realize that the great esoteric definitive meaning—it is not an object for all.

The highest indestructible bonds that are devoid of transition or transformation, and
The radiant light of intrinsic intelligence—this huge open space of wisdom energy—
Also always dwell within oneself.
Seeing this by the grace of the Guru, the Glorious Protector, the Lord of Doctrine
Is called binding all phenomena with continuous simplicity.

Apart from awareness, i.e., the enlightening mind, phenomena are absent. Hence it is said that, "no one at all escapes from being bound by the mind-as-such." It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> There are no phenomena other than the mind.

All the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa have never wavered from reality—the open space of the All Good. [86] It is stated in *Surpassing the Six Collections of Consciousness (tshogs drug zil gnon):*

> Within the very range of the All Good free from activities,
> Saṃsāra is totally positive and nirvāṇa is positive too!

The definitive meaning of the Ati-Yoga is stamped with the seal of the sacred intention of the Guru, and therefore it depends (*rag las*) on whether or not his or her blessings are present. It is stated in *The Enlightened Essence of the Secret Vajra Root Tantra (rdo rje gsang ba'i snying po rtsa ba'i rgyud):*

> The hidden esoteric meaning that is released from within—
> Dwells within the teacher—your indestructible heart.

Therefore, that very dimension, i.e., the highest adamantine depth intentionality, is not a sphere of activity for any besides those of extremely high intelligence. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Those Ati-yogins who are endowed with good fortune and the karma
> Developed during previous immeasurable eons

For having faith in me, the all accomplishing pure and total presence,
See that there is no such thing as either view or meditation, nor are commitments to be protected.
They see that enlightened activities are not things towards which to strive, nor is there any path along which one proceeds.
They see that the spiritual levels are not things to be trained in, and that there is no cause and effect.
They see that there is no twofold division between conventional and ultimate truths.
They see that there is nothing to be cultivated or achieved, and
They see that neither altruistic aspirations (*sems bskyed*) nor antidotes exist.
In other words, they see the nature of mental constructs (*sems bskyed*), that is, universal creativity.
It is for precisely this reason that I taught such a particular purpose.

The depth intention of awareness, the dimension of radiant light, transcends words and thought, and can only be seen through the grace of the Guru. It is beyond the extremes of presence and absence, and thus it is simplicity itself. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

The extremely quick primordial wisdom that is free from all conceptual thought
Is like a precious gem that emerges from all spiritual friends.

CONVICTING [ALL PHENOMENA] IN AND AS SIMPLICITY IN WHICH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL OBJECTS ARE ABSENT

As for the essential meaning of convicting [all phenomena] into simplicity,
External phenomena always dwell within the range of un-produced emptiness—
They do not abide, and neither do they come or go, and hence they defy description or linguistic expression.
Internal phenomena appear and dissolve indistinguishably (*ris med*).

Like the traces of a bird in the sky—they cannot be observed.

All phenomena of external objects that appear to the face of awareness are empty. This is just like reflections that, although they vividly appear, are in fact absent. Although all internal phenomena appear in terms of movement like the traces of flying in the sky, they naturally disappear into awareness, the nature of which is absence (*rig med*). This is because, since it is not present anywhere, consciousness manifests without obstruction within the unborn ground of awareness, and hence it is the primordially abiding appearance of the ground, [87] completely divorced from conceptual factors. It is stated in *The Precious Blazing Relics of the Enlightened Body Tantra (sku gdung 'bar ba rin po che'i rgyud):*

> The naturally absent appearances [of all phenomena] within the ground
> Light up in and as phenomena although they cannot be verbally or mentally expressed.
> Also, in the equality of the three times,
> All this naturally abides from the very beginning.

CONVICTING INTO EMPTY AWARENESS DEVOID OF CAUSATION

Objects, minds, and even self-emergent awareness just as it is
Are mere arbitrary designations, beyond description or expression, and free from conceptual elaboration.
Since, like space, they lack any agent, they are the empty range.
Activities and exertion being absent, they are beyond ethical notions of good and bad or virtue and vice.
Past beyond cause and effect, the ten natures [of the lower vehicles] are absent.
This is the wide-open balanced simplicity, the space that defies description and expression.
Phenomena and non-phenomena are primordially empty—they have never been present.
This nature, inexpressible and free from conceptual thought,

Is convicted into the Great Perfection that is completely separate from the intellect.

External objects and internal minds are absent, yet still vividly appear. Moreover, the essence of awareness is like space; in it all phenomena are exhausted, it transcends the intellect, and, lacking causal notions of virtue and vice, it is beyond the sphere of the ten natures [of the eight lower vehicles]. Therefore, it is convicted into the equality of the continuous simplicity that cannot be thought of or expressed. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Since I am the nucleus of the pure and total presence of everything,
The esoteric instructions are not present somewhere else.

Since I completely transcend reductive strategies of reification and negation,
I convict all phenomena.

Since I am nothing other than the sphere of absence,
I also convict the view into a non-cultivated state.

Since apart from me there is nothing to be guarded,
I convict commitments into a state where guarding is absent.

Since apart from me there is nothing to be sought after,
I convict enlightened activities into a state without seeking.

Since apart from me there is no place to abide,
I convict the spiritual grounds into a state without any training.

Since obscurations are primordially absent in me,
I convict them into a state of being the self-emergent primordial wisdom.

Since I am un-produced reality itself,
I convict it into a state of being the subtle reality.

Since there is no progress to someplace apart from me,
I convict it into a condition devoid of progress on paths.

Since all Buddhas, sentient beings, appearances [88] and their interpretations, the environment and its contents

Emerge from me—the pure and total nucleus of enlightenment—
I convict them all into a state of non-duality.

Since this all is determined to be self-emergent primordial wisdom,
I convict it into the thunderbolt (*thog 'bebs*) of the great precepts.

Since all phenomena are nothing apart from me,
I—universal creativity—completely convict them all.

CONCLUDING VERSE TO THE SECOND CHAPTER

The nucleus of all phenomena is the range of the enlightening mind.
Appearances and their interpretations, whether of saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, are naturall manifesting empty forms.
I have explained this commentary on the precious second topic:
The meaning of continuous simplicity that is beyond the domain of conceptual thought.
All the Conquerors of the three times, Awareness-Holders, protrectresses and
Accomplished Yogic visionaries, together the ocean of vow-holders,
Beings endowed with the highest intelligence, good fortune and faith and
The assemblies of Ḍākiṇis should rejoice in this!

THE TEACHING THAT ALL PHENOMENA ARE SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

FIRST: THE JEWEL-LIKE SPONTANEOUS PRESENCE

The nature that is spontaneously present from the beginning
No one ever created—it has been abiding here from day one.
The jewel-like enlightening mind that is the source of everything
Serves as the ground that is the source for all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

The valuable properties of a jewel are naturally and perfectly present in that jewel from the very beginning. Similarly, [although] within the enlightening mind of awareness an essence is not present anywhere, the dynamism of awareness is spontaneously present in the expanse or ground of all phenomena as the qualities of whatever manifests. It is stated in *The Three Times at a Single Stroke (dus gsum chig chod):*

> Since it is spontaneously present and has no spatial or philosophical positions or interior or exterior,
> Awareness, which lacks limits or boundaries, is wide open like the sky.
> Not being a confined space, it is an openness that suffuses reality;
> Without cardinal and ordinal directions or even the directions of up and down, it pervades everything.
> Unborn and unceasing, it is concentrated within the singular seminal nucleus, and
> Since everything one desires arises from this singular reality, it exhausts all phenomena and has no boundaries.
> Since it neither increases nor decreases, [89] awareness is a treasury of precious jewels.

It is further stated in *Encountering The Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug phrad):*

> Within the spontaneously present openness is the ground from which everything emerges.
> The wheel, qualities, and the enlightened activities that adorn the Enlightened

> Body, Speech, and Mind of the Buddhas
> Emerge without any polarization.
> The expanse of reality is the precious jewel of all that one could wish for—
> Everything is spontaneously present without having to search for it!

And it in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)* it is stated:

> The nature of the enlightening mind, which is the essential core of everything,
> Is spontaneously present from the very beginning, and hence,
> There is no need to stress out over the ten natures [of the lower vehicles]!

THE GREAT SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT GROUND PRESENCING

> **Appearances and their fictive interpretations appear from within the range of space, and similarly**
> **Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa shine from within the enlightening mind without obstruction.**
> **Dreams of various things occur during sleep, and similarly**
> **The six types of transmigrating beings and the three realms manifest from the range of the mind.**
> **From the very moment they manifest, all phenomena are already within the range of awareness.**
> **Empty yet spontaneously present, they are the presencing of the ground.**

The worldly environment and the beings therein appear within the range of the sky, and similarly saṃsāra and nirvāṇa shine from within the range of awareness as its unobstructed dynamism. If you ask, "through the dynamism of *what*?" [we answer the following]. Dreams manifest through the dynamic potential of sleep. Similarly, through not recognizing [even] a portion of awareness, appearances as the sentient beings of the three realms—the entire animate and inanimate world—manifest through the dynamism that manifests as the minds of the eight types of cognition. Hallucinations appear through the dynamic power of a fever induced by an infectious disease. Similarly, although the appearances of saṃsāra naturally manifest through the force of your distorted mind, from the very moment they manifest, they

are purely natural empty appearances. It is stated in *Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug 'phrad)*:

> Within the spontaneously present openness is the ground from which everything emerges.
> Everything that appears in the form of interior, exterior, sentient beings, and so forth
> Is the non-polarized enlightened gestalt; they manifest as the wheel of ornamentation.
> Even the resonance in the best, worst and mediocre sounds and voices
> Is the non-polarized enlightened speech; it manifests as the wheel of ornamentation.
> All phenomena are unified within the indistinguishable ultimate essence and this
> Is the non-polarized enlightened mind; it manifests as the wheel of ornamentation.

SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT NON-DUALITY

> **Moreover, the ground and the way in which appearances on the ground manifest**
> **Are in their nature free from being identical or diverse, [90] but both**
> **Shine through the gateway of spontaneously present awareness from the beginning.**
> **Within the playful dynamics of awareness, although the two aspects of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, or**
> **Pure and impure appear individually,**
> **From the very moment they appear, they are unified within reality's expanse, devoid of ethical notions of good and evil.**

The ground—the enlightening mind of awareness—is the great spontaneous presence, empty and luminous enlightening. The presencing of the ground—phenomena which appearing within the range of that, i.e., all phenomena which are appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—shine through the gateway of spontaneously present awareness. Although they appear as if they were involved with ethical notions of good and evil, since the

singular expanse of reality is devoid of good and evil, they transcend notions of identity and individuality. This is said to be " the range of self-emergent awareness." Concerning this, it is stated in *The Three Times in a Single Stroke (dus gsum chig chod):*

> Through condensing into one, everything is the unitary expanse.
> Unity is unproduced, it is the unborn expanse.
> The miraculous apparitions generated from the unborn expanse
> Are not fragmented and are completely indeterminate.

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> The spiritual gestalts, primordial wisdom and good qualities of the Buddhas and
> The bodies, karmic pre-dispositions and so forth of sentient beings—
> All the assembled appearances and their interpretations, the environment and the beings therein
> Are the primordial essence of the enlightening mind.

THE GREAT SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT THREE SPIRITUAL GESTALTS

> **When the five-colored lights shine without obstruction through crystal,**
> **Even if you grasp at the individual colors of the lights,**
> **Good and evil being absent, they are the dynamic potential of this single crystal sphere.**
> **Intrinsic awareness, the ground, is like an orb of crystal:**
> **Its emptiness is the nature of the Reality-Gestalt;**
> **Its natural interior radiant luminosity is the perfected Enjoyment-Gestalt;**
> **Its unobstructed conduit that is the ground for the manifestation is the Emanation-Gestalt.**
> **Within the ground of reality's expanse, the three spiritual gestalts are spontaneously present.**

Just as crystal and the five colored lights within it are the same expanse, and hence are devoid of good or evil, the crystal-like empty awareness is the Reality-Gestalt, and the radiant factor of

awareness shining as the five colored lights within that is the Enjoyment-Gestalt. Just as [these colored lights] are able to shine outwards from the crystal and light up the path, the unobstructed conduit for the shining outwards of awareness is the Emanation-Gestalt. This is because, in the context of the ground, the essence of the three spiritual gestalts is the same, and hence in actuality there is no good or evil and the Form-Gestalts that manifest from that [essence] appear to disciples. Even the Reality-Gestalt is devoid of good and evil; it is the enlightening mind and [91] that which manifests as its dynamic potential, and therefore it is all the magical display of the singular awareness. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> I—universal creativity— am the essence of the three spiritual gestalts.
> Dwelling within the state of non-conceptual balance,
> I am free from discursive elaboration and am the essence of the Reality-Gestalt.
> Being the magical display of creation that naturally occurs,
> I am the perfectly complete Enjoyment-Gestalt—the source of whatever one desires.
> Fulfilling the aims of whatever disciples through the force of resonating concern,
> That is the essence of the Emanation-Gestalt.

And it is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

> Like an exalted body of colored crystal whose nature is complete purity—
> Stainless, unimpeded and limpid—that's the Reality-Gestalt babe!
> Although the elements of earth water fire and wind all appear within the sky,
> Without realizing this, they indeed appear to the intellect in terms of concrete characteristics.
> They appear, but are absent in their nature; they appear clearly as the inner radiance of primordial wisdom.
> For example, although a rainbow clearly lights up in the sky,
> It is not separate from the sky—it just appears as if it were separate.
> It abides in the range of the sky, and, like the sky, it cannot be separated from that.
> Within the space in which reality and the Reality-Gestalt cannot be distinguished,
> The exterior radiance of primordial wisdom naturally dawns, appears, and illuminates.

It appears as if it were separate and illumines without obstruction.

Lucid and non-conceptual, primordial cognition is the Reality-Gestalt.

Automatically manifesting in and as itself, the Enjoyment-Gestalt is primordially awakened.

The Emanation-Body of resonating concern (*thugs rje*) is completely purified of the two extremes.

EVERYTHING IS THE SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT ENLIGHTENING MIND

Even at the time of the ground-presencing which shines from within that reality,

There are the pure three spiritual gestalts, which are the self-projections of the Conquerors, and

All appearances such as the impure environment and the beings therein.

As for that, it's natural essence is threefold: empty, luminous, and diverse,

Which are the playfulness of the Reality-Gestalt, the Enjoyment-Gestalt, and the Emanation-Gestalt.

All three spiritual gestalts, which are the ground-presencing of awareness' playful dynamism,

Are naturally manifesting and spontaneously present—they are not to be sought from some other place.

Having understood the distinctions of these very well,

You must realize that, within the range of the enlightening mind,

The phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are the spontaneously present three spiritual gestalts.

All phenomena are shown to be in the nature of the three spontaneously present spiritual gestalts. However, as soon as it is explained that the spontaneously present ground, awareness' own essence, and the three spiritual gestalts are identical in essence, the appearances of the environment and the beings therein, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, which shine forth from within the range of that [92] are encompassed in and as the two types of appearance that shine as the

playfulness of the three spiritual gestalts—the presencing of the ground. Therefore, these appearances are only to be called "the three spontaneously present spiritual gestalts." The playfulness of awareness manifests as the pure Reality-Gestalt of the Buddhas, the five castes of the Enjoyment-Gestalt, and the various Emanation-Gestalts. These three and the impure body, speech and mind of saṃsāra, which are all appearances of the Emanation, Enjoyment, and Reality Gestalts, are encompassed within a single expanse in spontaneously present emptiness. Since they are all devoid of good and evil, they are all said to be, "the ornamentation and playfulness of the spontaneously present expanse." As for that, it is stated in *Surpassing the Six Collections of Consciousness (tshogs drug zil gnon):*

> The spontaneously present and immutable mind-as-such is [like] the open space of the sky.
> The indeterminate playfulness of awareness is the open space for the magical display of resonating concern (*thugs rje*).
> Everything is the ornamentation of reality's expanse, and besides that,
> There are no separate objects that must be brought to cessation elsewhere.

EVERYTHING IS THE ENLIGHTENING MIND

> **The enlightened bodies and primordial wisdom of the Buddhas of the three times and**
> **The body, speech, and mind of the sentient beings of the three realms and**
> **All the phenomena of appearances and their interpretations based on karma and distorted emotions**
> **Are nothing at all besides the enlightening mind.**

The essence of gold is identical although you still cling to its beauty through making an amazing statue, ornaments and bracelets, or you cling to it as disgusting (*gtsog pa*) by making a chamber pot. Either way, however, in essence it is identical in terms of its basic condition being gold. The element of gold has no ethical ideas such as good and evil. Similarly, pure Buddhas and impure sentient beings, so-called "karma" and "predispositions," whatever may appear, are only designated individually in the context of the [ordinary] mind. However, [in fact] they

are contained within the same expanse of reality as the enlightening mind and its dynamic potential. Therefore, within the enlightening mind there is absolutely no good or evil. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Buddhas, sentient beings, karmic actions, and karmic predispositions—
> There are no phenomena besides the enlightening mind.

THE SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT UNIVERSAL TREASURY

> **Within the spontaneously present open space of awareness is the ground that is the source of everything.**
> **All appearances as visual forms such as interior, exterior, and sentient beings,**
> **Are the non-polarized gestalt of the Buddha; they shine as the wheel of awareness' ornamentation.**
> **Sounds and voices, whether heard as excellent, average, or inferior, [93]**
> **Are the non-polarized speech of the Buddhas; they shine as the wheel of awareness' ornamentation.**
> **All ordinary minds, primordial cognition, realizations and non-realizations**
> **Are the non-polarized mind of the Buddhas; they shine as the wheel of awareness' ornamentation.**
> **Since the talents (*yon tan*) and enlightened deeds of the Buddhas emerge without prejudice or polarization,**
> **Within the jewel-like expanse that gives rise to whatever you may desire,**
> **Everything just emerges by itself without being sought out. Hence,**
> **This is called, "self-emergent primordial wisdom, spontaneously present."**

Although the phenomena, which are appearances and their interpretations in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, naturally appear from within the essence of awareness and its range, they

manifest without ever having had to search for them. Sentient beings' various physical, verbal, and mental agents and activities naturally manifest from the body, speech, mind, talents and enlightened deeds of the Buddhas as a wheel that adorns the naturally appearing awareness. Therefore, it is said that, "the singular/unitary space of awareness from which everything emerges is a spontaneously present jewel." From the great pure ground, things emerge in eight different ways—the six modes of manifestation and the two gateways (*sgo*) of expression. Therefore, the natural manifestation of the ground is the dynamic potential and qualities of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the animate and inanimate universe, and sentient beings. Concerning this it is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):*

> Spontaneously present, without any definite name attached,
> [Everything] arises in the manner of the eight means of manifestation.
> Since the way this appears is unobstructed,
> A safe place for all sentient beings appears
> Through the mode of manifestation that accords with resonating concern (*thugs rje*).
> Since this appearance lights up from unobstructed natural radiance,
> It appears in the manner of the clear luminosity of the five colored lights.
> Since the factor of enlightened cognition is unobstructed,
> Within the very gateway of pure primordial wisdom,
> Appearances are unobstructed and shine as if a pathway.
> Since the natural manifestation perfects the limits of all physical forms,
> It appears in accord with the spiritual gestalt of everything.
> Since the essence of cognition is singular/unitary,
> It is non-dual, and manifests accordingly.
> Since just that essence of cognition does not abide in its own special place,
> It manifests on the indeterminate and spontaneously present ground
> As the appearance of the great freedom from extremes.
> Since transparent awareness is complete in and as one,
> It is free from having some inherent essence
> In the gateway of pure primordial wisdom itself.
> Since the mode of emergence is unobstructed,

It shines from within the factor pervasive manifestation
As the source of all sentient beings,
And also as if it were the door for impure saṃsāra.
All this appears in terms of the eight modes of manifestation. [94]
Since it all naturally manifests in the manner of emergence,
It is called the "spontaneously present appearance"
That appears in the manner of a jewel.

SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT WITHOUT STRESSING OUT

The spontaneously present ground for the varieties of phenomena
Is the enlightening mind, and since it is always spontaneously present,
The three spiritual gestalts are present within you in their own guise without searching for them.
Since you do not need to stress yourself out over notions of virtue and vice which are based on causation,
Just letting go into the natural state is called, "the yoga of not doing anything."
There being no point in exerting yourself in activities of acceptance and rejection, the spontaneously present openness of awareness
Is primordially complete—don't sweat it over the things of the present!

Since good qualities are present in the essence of awareness right from the beginning, there is never any need to stress yourself out trying to be patient or energetic. Since notions of virtue and vice based on cause and effect are absent, you should not rely upon engaging in activities of avoidance and acceptance.

Question: Well, in that case, you would not accomplish anything, and the self-emergent primordial wisdom would disappear.

Answer: Due to thinking [mistakenly] like this, you must realize that letting yourself go into the natural state is the great exhaustion of phenomena, about which it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Since there is no relying on some past event,
You do not attempt to accomplish anything through causes, and you do not desire results.
Due to the depth intention that is devoid of desire,
The nature of awareness will always be spontaneously present—
It is from the beginning, and you do not have to do a damned thing.
Since objects do not vacillate but remain just as they are,
You do not need to accomplish anything in terms of their natural condition.
Since the nature of all phenomena is spontaneously present, and
Since the Buddhas of the three times are also present,
Do not immerse yourself in the precepts of striving and accomplishment!
If you search for it, the depth contemplation which seeks everything
Does not accomplish anything, but becomes a great diseased contemplation!

And:

I—universal creativity—am always already finished "doing," and therefore
How much more do I teach that you need to do anything whatsoever.
My attendants would become stricken with the disease of striving.
This would lead to the fault of negating self-emergent primordial wisdom.
There would be the fault of trying to fabricate something out of suchness.
If untruth contaminates the truth through deception,
You will not achieve non-activity through exertion that is not [non-activity].

SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT ABSENCE OF ACTIVITIES

Even the enlightenment of all the Conquerors of the three times
Is spontaneously present within the intense bliss of letting yourself go into your own natural state.
Without depending on the doctrines of those of inferior fortune, which are based on cause and effect,
Check out the space-like nature of non-activity!

Awareness—the great spontaneously present Buddhahood—is the natural letting go into your natural condition. Seeing this as your own bed without fabrication or contamination, [95] you will stop trying to accomplish anything by striving and achievement. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

> Even the past Buddhas of previous generations
> Never had to search elsewhere or contrive something apart from their own natural awareness.
> No one has ever crafted anything out of reality just as it is.
> No one has ever cultivated conceptual depth contemplation.
> You attain your own natural awareness through non-conceptuality.
> Those who are here now and even those who have yet to arrive,
> Will accomplish through the non-conceptual balance.

All the doctrines based on cause and effect apply to immature beings of inferior fortune who are narrow-minded with regard to scriptures of provisional meaning and who hold wrong views. They do not apply, however, to the super-visionaries who have excellent fortune. This is because no matter how much you have polished a piece of wood, it will never make it as a jewel. Similarly, no matter how much you may have practiced acceptance and rejection based on cause and effect, you will be incapable of awakening to Buddhahood. As for this, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

> Therefore, the Great Perfection that transcends cause and effect,
> Is not a sphere of activity for those with no fortune, and thus
> They must behave in accordance with the doctrines of cause and effect.

And:

> Although I explicitly teach to those with small fortune and no karmic propensity without hiding anything,
> They still do not understand it.
> The poison of exerting themselves in cause and effect seizes them.
> A person who desires a precious jewel
> Will not obtain it through polishing a piece of wood.

Likewise, for super-visionaries endowed with fortune and good karma
The view, pledges, enlightened deeds, taking [experiences] onto the path,
Generating an altruistic attitude, achieving through meditation based on cause and effect, and antidotes are absent.
Seeing that the ultimate and the conventional are non-dual—
Is seeing the suchness of the mind. Therefore,
That serves as the underlying purpose with respect to such.

SINCE IT IS PRIMORDIALLY SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT, THERE IS NO NEED TO PRACTICE AT ALL

Since at the moment there is no need at all to achieve reality just as it is,
Within the great spontaneously present and uncontrived primordial condition (*ye bzhin*)
Completely eliminate the occurrence of and preoccupation with mental hopes and fears and
Recognize them as being the unsought for and spontaneously present expanse of reality.

Just as when the sun is present, there is no need to manufacture radiant light, when awareness is present, since it is already present as the Reality-Gestalt, there is no need to manufacture it later on with effort and exertion. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Without abiding, without conceptualizing, [96] without needing anything whatsoever,
You rest naturally within the non-conceptual sphere of equality.
All activities being always already completed, and the mind that strives will not arise.
Whenever you rest in that intensely blissful state,
It transforms into the enlightened nucleus of all phenomena.

SUMMARY OF THE MEANING OF SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT AWARENESS TRANSCENDING HOPES AND FEARS AND BEING THE ENLIGHTENED ESSENCE OF THE THREE SPIRITUAL GESTALTS

All phenomena, however they appear,
Are the three: the uncontrived essence, nature, and resonating concern of awareness.
Since these are [respectively] the playfulness of the Reality-Gestalt, the Enjoyment-Gestalt, and the Emanation-Gestalt,
Saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, and the three spiritual gestalts are the open space of the enlightening mind.
Since this enlightening mind is spontaneously present in and as the great state of uncontrived balance,
There is no question of avoiding saṃsāra or achieving nirvāṇa.
Reductive strategies of reification and negation being quelled (*zhi ba*), you rest within the actual enlightened nucleus.
This is the range of all phenomena and the enlightening mind,
And it is indicted in and as being spontaneously present from the beginning.

All phenomena, which are appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, abide within the great spontaneously present natural inner radiance of the three spiritual gestalts, i.e., the empty essence of awareness, the luminous nature of awareness, and diverse manifestations of awareness' resonating concern. Since the three, the essence, nature, and resonating concern of awareness abide within the spontaneously present three spiritual gestalts of the ground, saṃsāra lacks any inherent characteristics, and hence objects to be abandoned are not present. Also nirvāṇa, is not present as a cause to be taken up, since it does not exist as an object to be sought elsewhere. Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are balanced and equalized in the face of awareness, and this is the indictment of all phenomena into the depth intention of the spontaneously present dimension. It is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

The original essence, nature and
Resonating concern abide as three aspects.

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> As for my nature—the pure and total universal creativity—
> You do not have to search for it and it is naturally and spontaneously present.
> The enlightened core of all the Conquerors is the three spiritual gestalts.
> My nature (*rang bzhin*) is established as the uncontrived Reality-Gestalt.
> My essence (*ngo bo*) is the uncontrived and perfect Enjoyment-Gestalt.
> My resonating concern (*thugs rje*) is the revelation of the Emanation-Gestalt.
> I have never taught that the three spiritual gestalts are fruits to be achieved
> through searching!

The [expressions] "empty nature [of awareness]" and "radiant essence [of awareness]" are the occasion for differentiating between the depth character and its enlightened core, whereas the [expressions] "empty essence [of awareness]" and "radiant nature [of awareness]" are divided in terms of the teaching on reality's expanse and its enlightened core. The emptiness that is the Reality-Gestalt, the radiance that is the Enjoyment-Gestalt, and the mode of manifestation that is the Emanation-Gestalt are all in fact [97] identical.

ARRESTING ALL PHENOMENA INTO SPONTANEITY

ARRESTING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO THE MODE OF EMERGENCE AS THE TEACHING ON THE NATURAL MIND

> **All phenomena are arrested into the nexus of spontaneous presence.**
> **All appearances such as the five great elements and the environment**
> **along with the beings therein**
> **Shine forth as the to reveal the primordial and non-conceptual**
> **spontaneously presence.**
> **Not conceived in terms of self and other, they are pure in natural**
> **luminosity, and accordingly**
> **You must arrest them into the nexus of your own natural mind that is**
> **free from stressful activities.**
> **Release the six modalities of consciousness that are disclosed through**
> **the unobstructed mode of appearance into an easy relaxed state!**

The interior radiant factor of the spontaneously present natural five-colored lights within the range of the great luminous empty original purity—the crystalline self-emergent wisdom of awareness—is the five great elements. Forms are the interior five-colored lights at the time they shine radiantly outwards from that. This resembles a radiant light shining outwards from the light inside a crystal. By [mistakenly] interpreting just this [radiance] as "self" at the time of its origin, you stray (*'khrul*) into the environment along with its beings, all of which is composed of the impure elements. At the time of straying, the exterior radiance of the five elements, which are principally the awareness' natural dynamic potential, appears in an impure guise. Recognizing this, the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space, abide in natural luminosity right when they arise, and are not conceived in terms of self and other. This example shows that intrinsic intelligence takes its stand (*shig ge*) in non-conceptuality, and is bonded (*bun ne*) into the absence of true existence. Within the range in which conceptions with respect to appearances are absent, it rests in the natural luminosity without grasping at distorted appearances. Similarly, even when the light of a reflection or the enlightened seminal nucleus shines forth in its immediacy, you take your stand in and are bonded into the non-conceptual natural luminosity. As for the resting in that state, it is said that the "teacher" (*ston pa*) of the five elements that are the natural essence of appearances "teaches" (*bstan pa*) the five non-conceptual phenomena of equality, and the "yogic visionary" (*rnal 'byor pa*) rests in the depth intention of that. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

> From the universal cause—the enlightening mind—
> Arise the five great elements—the essence of the mind—
> The five bodhisattva teachers.
> Their spiritual gestalts are the Gestalts of Complete Enjoyment.
> Their doctrines manifest through awareness' own natural essence.
> These teachers teach the nature of intrinsic intelligence.
> These teachers, who are the Gestalts of Complete Enjoyment,
> Are the depth intention itself, and as such do not need to realize themselves.
> They do not conceptualize in terms of other objects or phenomena.
> These five teachers, who are the enlightening mind,
> Teach that everything is also accord with that reality.

The primordial wisdom of the enlightening mind [98]
Naturally emerges as the enlightened gestalt of these teachers, and thus
They do not teach with word or letters.
The teaching on the nature of intrinsic intelligence
Is not conceived in terms of self and is not conceived in terms of other;
It is the teaching of the depth intention of non-conceptual equality.
All the sentient beings of the three realms
Realize that and become the equals of all Buddhas—
They accomplish the reality they seek without looking for it.

The beginning of this quotation is said to apply to water, fire, wind and space as well.

ARRESTING SENSE CONSCIOUSNESS AND CONCEPTUALITY INTO EMPTY PURITY

Awareness—the source of everything—is luminously radiant spontaneous presence.
It is the uncontrived nexus of the five sense-doors in which emitting and recollecting are absent.
Empty awareness is the depth intention of the spontaneously present Reality-Gestalt.
Recognize this, reach some certainty about it, and then place yourself into a state completely free from conceptual elaborations!

When the five external objects appear, the sense consciousnesses arise immediately at which time you place yourself within a state of bright clarity in the natural radiance of awareness without any delay (*ma shor ba*). This is the vital point (*gnad*) by which sense consciousness is purified into luminous emptiness. It is stated in *The Sky Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen mkha' la lding):*

Arrest your sense consciousness into the space between appearance and emptiness which is free from physical and verbal activities—
The critical nexus of the great unsought-for huge vortex free from activities.

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

I—the All Good— teach that
Seeing the mind-as-such, which is devoid of feelings and events,
Actually, clearly, and without mental conceptions
Is called, "The depth intention in which going and coming are completely exhausted."

ARRESTING [MINDS AND OBJECTS] INTO THE GREAT NATURAL CONTEMPLATION

In the pure vast open space of intrinsic awareness where nets [of distorted conceptuality] dissolve,
You arrest all external objects and internal minds into the nexus of balanced equality,
The spontaneously present natural contemplation.
Just like the strong current of a river flows at all times,
The flow of uncultivated spontaneously present primordial wisdom is uninterrupted.
The enlightened core of all phenomena—the self-emergent original open space of awareness—
Fulfills (*tshad du phyin*) the actual depth intention of the All Good Samantabhadra.

Although everyone tries to express [this natural spontaneous contemplation] with terms such as "uncultivated" or "undistracted," they are still merely bound by intellectual entanglements (*blo 'jur bu*). In this context, the uncultivated contemplation, which is [analogous to] the flow of a river, is the free and easy dawning of awareness with respect to whatever appears. At that time one relaxes into the natural flow of uninterrupted recognition. Thus, the continuous simplicity is equalized into luminous and naturally pure emptiness, and this is the uninterrupted flow of equality. Since [all appearances] shine without obstruction from within un-produced awareness [99] and dissolve into the open space of un-produced awareness, they become transformed into the contemplation which is the flow of the river of natural awakening. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

Since the mind-as-such is un-produced, all verbal expressions

And even all conduct vis-à-vis the dimension in which natural existence is absent,
No one will ever completely realize this un-produced dimension in fact.
Therefore, having understood these precepts of the All Creating King,
You rest in the undistracted dimension but
You do not enter it by means of exertion or train the mind in it through antidotes.
You do not engage objects, nor do you become absorbed into mindfulness.
Since whatever arises is in fact just that suchness,
You must enter into my dimension—the dimension of universal creativity!

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

I—the All Good—teach that
Within the mind-as-such which is devoid of acceptance and rejection,
The appearance of natural non-polarized freedom
Is called the "intention of great[230] pervasiveness."

ARRESTING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO THE GREAT SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT LETTING GO

The origin of all phenomena is the enlightening mind;
The enlightening mind is like space, the universal analogy.
The open space of the sky contains everything and
Exertion being absent, its nature is pure. Similarly,
It is devoid of activities, completely transcends the domain of conceptual thought and
Whatever appears is arrested into the nexus of the great letting go—
All internal and external phenomena are arrested into spontaneous presence.

The environment and the beings inside of it are all contained within the sky, and saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are fully contained within the essence of awareness. Therefore, at the time that the essence of awareness manifests as any appearance whatsoever, you completely release the cognition of that into its own place and cause it to become separated from the mental and

linguistic expressions of ego-driven memories and conceptuality. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Whatever it seems there is to be done, whatever appears, within reality
> Liberation is demonstrated by resting naturally without intellectualizing.

And it is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

> With respect to the distortions associated with the impure presencing of the ground,
> Without contriving the aspects of the various gateways of the senses,
> Completely letting go is the vital point.
> The guru's secret quintessential instructions arise due to that.
> Things appear without being objects of apprehension and
> The mind appears without being an apprehending subject.
> Eyes see without analysis.
> It leads you along the path of absence, reality itself, and
> Places you onto the ground that is devoid of meditating on views. [100]
> Devoid of activities, free from striving, all rolled into the one final result.
> The extremes of appearance cannot abide in this.

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

> I—the All Good—teach that
> Within the mind-as-such, in which anguish is absent,
> Appearances that are free from optimism and pessimism
> Are called the depth intention of the primordial letting-go, endowed with confidence.

ARRESTING ALL PHENOMENA INTO A SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT STATE FREE FROM EXERTION IN ACTIVITIES

> **Production is absent, cessation is absent,**
> **Coming is absent, going is absent, and so on.**
> **All this is completely concentrated into the depth intention of the Conquerors just as it is. Therefore,**

The pure depth contemplation is spontaneously present and non-wavering.
All phenomena are arrested into the nexus in which there is nothing to be done.

If all phenomena are not created/manufactured, then they never waver from their own bed, i.e., the ground. Due to being spontaneously established in and as the depth intention of the Conquerors, your body never moves, your speech never speaks, and your mind rests evenly (*phyam gdal nas*) within the great spontaneously present immediate awakening (*har sangs*), which is like a vast circle of space. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

Within the pure and total reality in which acceptance and rejection are absent,
Your body and mind become uncontrived through residing in the sky-like awareness.
Since ideology and resentment are absent, you do not need to cultivate correct views.
Within the sky-like awareness which is completely pacified and free from all nasty scummy residue (*rnyog pa*),
You do not engage objects, and the depth intention is not engaged through observable objects.

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa)*:

Within the mind-as-such in which distorted conceptuality is absent,
Since everything appears naturally, ceaselessly, and without grasping,
You recognize them as the sphere of luminous intrinsic intelligence.

I—the All Good— teach that
Within the mind-as-such in which conceptual thought is absent,
The naturally abiding spontaneously present infinite appearances
Are called, "the intention in which the four terms are naturally reversed."

I—the All Good—teach that
Within the mind-as-such in which ego-driven memory is absent,
The completely pure appearances that cause things to manifest

Are called, "the contemplation in which reification naturally dissolves."

I—the All Good—teach that

Within the mind-as-such in which events and sensation are absent,

The appearances of the non-conceptual special insight

Are called, "the intention in which coming and going are exhausted."

INCARCERATING ALL PHENOMENA INTO THE GREAT PRIMORDIAL SPONTANEITY

INCARCERATING EVERYTHING INTO THE PURE SPONTANEOUS PRESENCE [101]

All phenomena are Incarcerated into the bonds of spontaneous presence. As for that,

All appearances and their fictive interpretations are naturally appearing and spontaneously present;

Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety are spontaneously present in and as the playfulness of awareness;

The enlightening mind is spontaneously present from the very beginning. Therefore,

All phenomena are nothing except spontaneous presence.

As for that, all environments and the beings inside of them, appearances and their fictive interpretations are spontaneously present in and as the natural appearance of the mind-as-such. This is said to be like, for instance, a dream being spontaneously present as your own projections in sleep.[231] All the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa spontaneously shine forth from awareness' dynamic potential as its playfulness. This is said to be like, for instance, the five-colored lights shining from a crystal. Awareness—the luminously empty enlightening mind—is always already spontaneously present within the great original purity. This is said to be like, for instance, the sky. It is stated in *The Three Times at a Single Stroke (dus gsum chig chod):*

The ground for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety is the enlightening mind;

The ground for the enlightening mind is spontaneously present

The essence of spontaneous presence is indeterminate.

Since the dimension of spontaneous presence is un-produced,

The un-produced spontaneous presence is free from past and future, high and low.

The essence of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety is the enlightening mind;
The essence of the enlightening mind shines indeterminately.
The ground for this indeterminacy is spontaneous presence.
Since the dimension of indeterminacy is un-produced,
The un-produced indeterminacy is free from past or future, beginning or end.

The dimension of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety is the enlightening mind;
The dimension of the enlightening mind is the absence of production;
The nature of the absence of production is spontaneous presence;
The essence of the absence of production is indeterminacy;
Since the dimension of the absence of production is un-produced,
The un-produced absence of production is free from past or future, beginning or end.

The actuality (*bdag nyid*) of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety is the enlightening mind.
The actuality of the enlightening mind is the absence of beginning or end.
The ground for the absence of beginning and end is spontaneous presence.
The essence of the absence of beginning and end is indeterminacy;
Since the dimension of the absence of beginning and end is un-produced,
The non-abiding actuality is free from past or future, beginning or end.

The abiding reality in which beginning and end are absent cannot be attained. Within that
The mode of manifestation that is devoid of beginning and end does not need to be stopped.
The mode of being that is devoid of beginning and end cannot be named. Within that
The mode of dissolution that is devoid of beginning and end is continuous and uninterrupted.
Uninterrupted continuous reality is the vortex (*klong*) of balanced equality.
It intrinsically dwells in and as the vortex in which everything is equalized and balanced.

Spontaneously present awareness has the three actualities (*bdag nyid*) of the ground, essence, and dimension/meaning, by means of which it is taught to be the self-presencing of the three spontaneities. [102]

THE BONDS OF SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT STRESS-FREE AWARENESS

Since the nature of the mind is spontaneously present,
The ground, origin and enlightened nucleus are all concentrated within the enlightening mind.
Since it is spontaneously present without having to chase after it by means of the ten natures [of the lower vehicles],
There is no need for you to stress out in the depth contemplation meditating on the view.
There is no need for you to accomplish anything from another in accordance with the system of causation.
There is no need for you to generate the fantasies (*khu 'phrig*) of optimism and pessimism.
The primal Reality-Gestalt is spontaneously present right now!

The Reality-Gestalt is primordially present as a seamless unity within the essence of awareness. Hence, you do not need to re-establish it by means of the ten natures of stressing out over hopes and fears such as the view, meditation, conduct and the fruit, or the generation and completion stages of tantric meditation, enlightened activities, and so forth. Therefore, it is taught that you do not have to search for this by way of the ten natures. As for this, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

Hey! The teacher of the teachers, the All Creating King,
Caused a scripture to appear to the retinue of the uncontrived mind.
Yogic visionaries who realize awareness' lack of production without exception
Should not exert themselves in the ten natures [of the lower vehicles].
Through understanding the nature of universal creativity—the enlightening mind—

One sees that it is not cognized through the dualistic structure of subject and object,
and there is nothing to be abandoned.
Through realizing this, you gain control over it, and by resting with that
dimension,
You become spontaneously established in and as the depth intention of the All
Creating King.

Moreover, this does not resemble doctrines/phenomena of exerting oneself in activities based on cause and effect. It is stated in the same text:

The view and conduct of the Great Perfection
Does not resemble practice based on notions of cause and effect.
The views and conduct of the Great Perfection are the enlightening mind, and that
Nature is like the sky.
In the sky analysis and investigation are bypassed.
Those who engage in analysis and investigation
Will not accomplish the sky-like dimension of enlightenment.

SUMMARY OF THE IMPORTANT POINTS OF IMMUTABLE SPONTANEITY

The great vortex of the mind-as-such is the range of immutable space.
Although saṃsāra naturally manifests from within the vortex of the three spiritual gestalts,
It never wavers from the vortex of the three spiritual gestalts from the beginning.
The indeterminate playfulness of awareness is the treasury of the miraculous appearances of its resonating concern.
Since everything shines from within the singular spontaneously present All Good,
They never wander from the expanse in which saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are subdued and controlled.
Since everything, whether positive or negative, is unobstructed

Everything [103] is the expense of the indestructible and spontaneously present enlightened nucleus.
All phenomena are primordially incarcerated within the shackles of spontaneity.

All phenomena, i.e., appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, never waver from the range of awareness—the great spontaneously present three spiritual gestalts. Hence, it is called the All Good's "expanse of the spontaneous absence of activities." It is stated in *Surpassing the Six Collections of Consciousness (tshogs drug zil gnon):*

Interior and exterior, gathering and dispersing, these are the dynamism of the enlightening mind.
Whatever appears is not [what it appears to be], but since there can be appearances of anything at all,
Phenomena that are devoid of activities are really remarkable—most amazing!
Through gaining control over all the vehicles of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,
The singular expanse that is devoid of activities completely surpasses everything.
There is no other object could become a limit or extreme.
Nothing ever wavers from the singular vortex that is devoid of activities.
Within this range of the All Good which is devoid of activities,
Saṃsāra is totally positive, and nirvāṇa is positive too—
Within the vortex of total positivity, both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are primordially absent.
All appearances are empty and totally positive.
Within the vortex of total positivity, empty appearances are primordially absent.
Birth and death are totally positive, and happiness and suffering are totally positive too—
Within the vortex of total positivity, birth, death, happiness and suffering are all absent.
Self and other are totally positive, and eternalism and nihilism are totally positive too—

> Within the vortex of total positivity, self, other, eternity and annihilation are all absent.
> Through grasping onto this absence as presence, you start mistakenly naming things.
> Since everything dawns from the singular spontaneously present expanse of the All Good,
> It completely outshines all extreme views without exception.
> In its singularity/uniqueness no one can challenge it—it is the absolute supreme of the great.
> This great of the great is the totally positive expanse of reality.
> Just like a king, it surpasses everything, and due to that
> It gains control over both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, neither of which ever move from its range.
> Everything is totally positive, and even if it appears as not positive, it is positive.
> Being devoid of good or evil, everything is unified within the All Good.

The vortex of the All Good is the primordial wisdom of the self-emergent awareness, the range of the luminously empty original purity. Within this, from the very moment [awareness' playfulness] appears as birth, death, happiness, suffering, etc., there is not even an atom that is established as birth, death, happiness, and suffering apart from this mode of manifestation. This is because they all are the expanse and the playfulness of singular awareness. [104] Since awareness is devoid of birth, death, happiness and suffering, whatever appears is not present as that essence. Rather, they are the appearances of reality—the original purity that is devoid of activities. Therefore, from the very moment [awareness] appears as saṃsāra, it not being present, saṃsāra does not exist as a thing to be forsaken. From the moment nirvāṇa appears, since it is not present, nirvāṇa does not exist as something to be achieved. Since stressful activities are absent in the sky-like depth character, you evenly rest without doing anything at all in the reality in which phenomena and the intellect are exhausted; this is the vital point of everything. Since karmic activity is absent within the essence of awareness, it transcends the extremes/limitations of viture and vice. If karmic activity were present in the essence of

awareness, there would be the fault of awareness not being self-emergent. As for this, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Why designate any and all congruent features
> With the term, "karma"?
> When you are ruled by karma,
> Then self-emergent primordial wisdom is no longer present!

If you respond by saying that you know [karma exists] because it manifests as suffering, then, apart from the mode of manifestation of the un-produced playfulness of the enlightening mind, that appearance would not be present in and as the self-emergent primordial wisdom. It is like a cloud: although they appear to disperse and gather, apart from being the playfulness or the dynamics of the sky, not being present in and as the essence of the sky. It is stated in the same text:

> The suffering of transmigrating beings is the enlightening mind.
> Due to being completely perfected, it revels in its aspects.
> There no need to protect oneself from that, and accordingly
> You should just rest in the equality that is like the extent of the sky.

CONVICTING ALL PHENOMENA INTO SPONTANEOUS PRESENCE

CONVICTING ALL PHENOMENA INTO INCONCEIVABLE INEXPRESSIBLE SPONTANEOUS PRESENCE

> **As for the spontaneously present nature of conviction,**
> **It is spontaneous, non-polarized, and devoid of interior and exterior. Within that**
> **All phenomena are natural appearances [of awareness] and coming, going, proof and refutation are all absent.**
> **The vortex of the great pervasiveness lacks the polarities of high and low.**
> **Completely indeterminate, and free from fragmentation,**
> **It cannot be indicated by saying, "this," and is inconceivable and inexpressible.**

Within the enlightening mind of awareness, proof, negation, transitions and transformations are all absent, and interior, exterior, above and below are also absent. Therefore, the essence of whatever appears and dawns is the inconceivable and inexpressible expanse. It is stated in *Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug 'phrad):*

> The origin for all the assembled phenomena is the enlightening mind.
> Since it is a seamless unity, [105] it is the non-dual enlightening mind.
> Since it is devoid of self and other, it is equalized expanse of reality.
> The resonating concern that behaves with equanimity towards all is the enlightening mind.
> The enlightened activity that fulfills the aims of transmigrating beings is the enlightening mind.
> Since it is devoid of transition and transformation, it is the un-produced expanse of reality.
> Whatever [appearances of] high or low may shine forth from reality's expanse,
> Within the enlightening mind hierarchies based on notions of superiority and inferiority are primordially absent.
> Whatever [appearances of] high and low may shine forth from reality's expanse,
> Within the vortex of non-activity divisions into inner and outer are primordially absent.
> Since interiority and exteriority are absent, reality is the transparent (*zang thal*) vortex.
> Whatever you do is an encounter with the indivisible range.

And it is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

> You will never find your vision through looking and searching for
> The unobstructed dimension of natural absence;
> In both interior and exterior, and even in just the exterior,
> There is no conceptual object, no matter how profound or minute.

CONVICTING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO SPONTANEITY—THE NUCLEUS OF MEANING

Since the essence of all phenomena is originally pure and

Spontaneously present as the very nature itself,

It is free from the extremes of presence, absence, eternity and annihilation—

Non-dual, it is the nature of the enlightening mind.

All phenomena are concentrated within awareness, and since the essence of the enlightening mind of awareness is empty of essence, it transcends the extreme [philosophical] position of eternalism and since the nature of the enlightening mind is luminously radiant, it transcends the extreme of nihilism. Transcending the four extremes of presence, absence, both and neither, the very spontaneous presence is the original purity, and is said to be "devoid of proofs, refutations, transitions and transformations." It is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

In that way, since everything is reality,

There is nothing at all to accept and

There is not the slightest thing to reject.

[Such is] the reality of complete absence.

It is further stated in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

Buddhahood, free from the four extremes, is intrinsic awareness itself.

Transcendence of presence, absence, proof and refutation is the Reality-Gestalt.

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

In its essence, it is originally pure;

In its nature it is spontaneously present.

EXTENSIVE TEACHING ON THE MEANING

The essence of original purity is not present anywhere.

Since its nature, like the sky, is completely pure from the very beginning, [106]

No one has ever manufactured this spontaneously present essence.

The unimpeded mode of manifestation may appear as any damned thing;
The universal source of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is free from past or future, beginning or end.

Since the originally pure natural essence of awareness transcends the extremes of presence and absence, it also transcends thought and verbal expression altogether. As it is said in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa)*:

The originally pure reality free from conceptual elaboration
Is the ground of the pure enlightened core of awareness' natural essence.
It is completely separate from words and letters,
And it cannot be delineated by means of linguistic expression.
It is completely free from superimpositions and verbal conventions,
And lacks the distorted conceptions of subjectivity and objectivity.
In it there are neither Buddhas nor sentient beings;
There are no phenomena/doctrines, or even any fantasies about them;
Everything is absent, completely absent, absolutely and totally absent!!

The nature of awareness is primordially and spontaneously present in and as the ground which serves as the basis for the manifestation of all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety. Its natural essence is not present as either saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, but its dynamism and playfulness manifest in any way whatsoever. It is stated in *The Great Tantra Endowed with Lustrous Auspiciousness (bkra shis mdzes ldan chen po'i rgyud)*:

Bummer! Although there are no distortions in me, distortions emerge through my dynamic potential. From within the immutable ground, the nature of awareness automatically shines out without obstruction, whereupon ignorance emerges through not ascertaining its resonating concern. For example, a cloud is not present as the sky in actuality, but occurs adventitiously. [Similarly] ignorance ("dimmed awareness") is not present in/as the ground; it naturally arises from the manifestation in accord (*ltar*) with awareness' resonating concern. The "abiding reality" of the spontaneously present ground comes to light (*chags*). Moreover, even

> that rests in the singular indeterminate appearance. Furthermore, even that possesses the eight types of modes of manifestation, and is referred to as "the abiding reality that is a precious amulet box." This is the unobstructed space (*go*) of all the qualities you desire.

From this, the appearances as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa shine forth. They manifest as saṃsāra through the impure gateway and nirvāṇa manifests from the pure gateway, but these appear as such within the range of awareness' natural essence. There is no movement or transformation within awareness. It is stated in *Surpassing the Six Collections of Consciousness (tshogs drug zil gnon):*

> Although saṃsāra and nirvāṇa naturally manifest from the vortex of the three spiritual gestalts,
> They have never wavered from the three spiritual gestalts. [107]

CONVICTING THE ELEMENTS INTO SPONTANEITY

> **On the actual ground that is unproduced, spontaneously present and indeterminate,**
> **The mode for manifestation that lacks high and low is unobstructed.**
> **The mode of being (*yin lugs*) that lacks an essence is unobserved.**
> **The mode of freedom/release that is devoid of a nature is uninterrupted/continuous.**
> **Following that point of manifestation, one comes to a conviction.**
> **This is called "dissolution into the ground, the expanse, the Reality-Gestalt in which all phenomena are exhausted."**

At first all phenomena dawn from within the unobstructed open space of spontaneously present awareness. Right now they are also appearing within the essence of awareness. Finally, they will also be released into the immutable open space of the spontaneously present enlightening mind of awareness. Then, since it never becomes something other than that, it is called "seizing the place in the fortress." Edges and corners being absent, [all phenomena] are rounded into the singular seminal nucleus of the Reality-Gestalt. Concerning this, it is stated in *The Three Times at a Single Stroke (dus gsum chig chod)* by the great master dGa' rab rDo rje:

The ground that is devoid of beginning and end is spontaneously present.
The mode of manifestation that is devoid of beginning and end is unobstructed.
The mode of being that is devoid of beginning and end is unobserved. And
The mode of release/dissolution that is devoid of beginning and end is uninterrupted.
Continuous/uninterrupted reality is the wind of equality.
It intrinsically abides within the vortex in which everything is balanced and equalized.
Within the singular reality there is neither equality nor non-equality.
Since it is continuous within the range of equality,
The non-polarized wheel of meaning is the fortress of the sky.
Since the four extreme views are confounded (*go bzlog*) within the singular spontaneous presence,
The non-polarized total pervasiveness is the fortress of the four grounds.
Since above, below and in-between and the cardinal and ordinal directions are explained,
The Conqueror spoke of the "fortress that stirs up the heavens (*bar snang*)."
This 'fortress' (*rdzong*) accommodates all views without bias.
'Citadel' (*mkhar*) refers to the citadel of the enlightening mind.
'Domain' (*yul*) refers to the un-produced vortex of reality's expanse.
'Name' (*ming*) refers to leaping over (*thod rgal*) by means of self-emergent primordial wisdom.
'Weapon' (*tshon*) refers to the indeterminate natural manifestation that is [like] a razor's edge.
The 'wheel of weapons' (*mtshon cha'i 'khor lo*), spontaneously present and non-polarized,
Completely cuts all the extreme views that grasp at things as being definite.
The seminal nucleus in which corners are absent completely rounds everything.
They are released into the unsought vortex in which divisions are absent. [108]

Therefore, when shining in and as the non-polarized spontaneous presence, maintain (*bskyangs*) [your realization of] natural appearances of awareness without partiality. Then, when you become free from the mortal coil, the playfulness of the interior and exterior distortions dissolve into reality—the "'mother." Then, when you see the site of the self-presencing of the spontaneously present ground, due to the advice to recognize this as the self-presencing of awareness, you reverse the process and are naturally released thereby. The weapon of spiritual precepts on recognizing awareness' own nature is like a razor, and due to conquering [distorted appearances] with the weapon-wheel of the spontaneously established self-presencing of awareness, you are released into the primal expanse. This is called "rounding [all phenomena] into the singular seminal nucleus of the Reality-Gestalt."

THE MANNER IN WHICH PHENOMENA DISSOLVE INTO AWARENESS: THE ACTUAL CONVICTION

Just as the clouds of the sky dissolve into the place they emerged from and
The light emanated from a crystal must again disappear into the crystal,
Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety, which are the presencing of the ground shining forth from within the ground,
Are originally pure within the essential ground—they seize their own places.
The great conviction of all phenomena
Is like when all conceptual elaborations naturally dissolve into the open space of non-conceptuality.

First, the dynamism of awareness shines unobstructedly from the spontaneously present ground, and thus now the distorted appearances of saṃsāra are the manifestations [of the dynamism of awareness] to the sense-doors as the various appearances of subjects, objects, environments and the beings therein. This manifestation is decisively settled through the [Great Perfection] view (*lta ba*), it is maintained through meditation (*sgom pa*), eliminates difficulties through the conduct (*spyod pa*), and abandons hopes and fears as the result (*'bras bu*). Therefore, when the yogic visionary (*rnal 'byor pa*) becomes free from the nets of physicality that

bind him/her, appearances as the distortions of subject and object will be naturally reversed. When, over a period of five days (*zhag*) [following death], the appearance of the realm of nirvāṇa manifests as spiritual gestalts and primordial wisdom, you recognize them as yourself [i.e., the essence of awareness]. Thus, you are released into the primal condition through dissolving into the essence of the appearance of spontaneously present realm. Initially, the distorted appearances of saṃsāra cease just like a cloud dissipates into the sky, and then dissolve into the appearance of the realm of nirvāṇa just like lights dissolving into a crystal. Ordinary thought and mental impressions all disappear like distorted emotions are released into emptiness. This is the awakening to Buddhahood from within the primal ground. Moreover, even though the essence of awareness, i.e., the Reality-Gestalt, and natural radiance, i.e., the Form-Gestalt are spontaneously present, they are constrained by corporeality and are not able to manifest. Therefore, when you become released from corporeality, they manifest and seize their own place within the original purity. [109] Just this is mentioned in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

> Inside the individual bodies of every sentient being
> Dwells the appearance of the pure primordial wisdom, but
> It is not able to appear vastly and extensively.
> For example, although the beings enclosed within wombs and eggs
> Are not manifest and are dark and covered,
> Their natural dynamic potential that abides perfectly will emerge. Similarly
> As soon as you cast off this body of distorted conceptuality,
> You will encounter the sphere of awareness' natural appearances.
> You will see the very intrinsic intelligence that abides primordially,
> The essence of awareness.
> You will see the appearance of the pure primordial wisdom and
> The truth of the Awakened Buddhas.

Since this is how saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear in the face of individual awareness, their reality is equal. In particular, look at their mode of manifestation. Appearances as the varieties of environments and beings of the present are your own saṃsāric projections. Appearances as spiritual gestalts and primordial wisdom in the intermediate state [between death and re-birth]

are appearances of nirvāṇa. These two are equal inasmuch as they both are released into the expanse of empty appearances, and this is how you should understand the expression "the equality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa."

THE NATURE OF THE TWO CONVICTIONS

Whatever present appearances there may be—all appearances as external objects and
The six collections of internal consciousnesses—dissolve into the Reality-Gestalt—your own bed. Therefore,
They are convicted into the spontaneously present expanse, the singular equality between interior and exterior.
The natural appearances of saṃsāra andnirvāṇa are manifestly awakened into enlightenment without appearances—
This is the actual conviction. Accordingly,
By letting yourself naturally rest in the radiant vortex from and into which external appearances and internal minds emanate and recollect,
You flow naturally without distorted conceptions, free from elaborations, at which time
It is the present conviction of the luminously empty radiance of the range of awareness.
This is called "firmly abiding within the interior of a jewel."

Everything is convicted into the precious spontaneous presence, and thus when things appear to the six senses, i.e., the five sense-doors and the mind, you naturally release them into the absence of emanation and recollection, or fabrication or pollution. Therefore, you arrive evenly at the luminously empty awareness that is devoid of center and margins, like the radiant, pure, and transparent sky. As for that, without being obscured by corporeality, the Reality-Gestalt on the inside dissolves into the precious spontaneous presence through being re-united (*gud 'brel*) in the absence of any distinction with the sky of the spontaneously present radiance. This is like being within an enclosed space and being re-untied with the great sky through a small door or opening in the wall. [110] Like a door or small hole in the wall through which you can see, by

setting your eyes on limpid radiance, awareness becomes connected to limpid radiance as well. When you become free from corpulent physicality, the three divisions of this [awareness] being absent, they are blend together within the singular spontaneous presence like the interior, exterior, and intermediate spaces [of a house] being blended together through destroying a house. Those practitioners of extremely acute faculties become free in this lifetime, and are awakened into the unimpeded direct upward movement, without any intermediate state. Therefore, this is the spontaneously present final mode of release. As for that, it is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

For those of extremely acute faculties,
They abide right this very minute
In the great primordial transparency,
Without even a second of lag-time.

The essence of the pure reality resides
Within the sky of the pure nature [of awareness].
Within that, transparent awareness shines.
This is not a manifestation but an abiding.

For example, compartmentalizing the transparent sky
By building a house,
There become two spaces: the space inside the house and
The pure natural space.
Through the open space (*mthongs*) of the door, without any covering,
The two spaces shine forth without any obscuration.

The enclosed awareness of the karmic predispositions and
The awareness that abides in space
Are connected through the door of primordial wisdom, and thus
Abide [together] within the great non-dual transparency,
Without the obscuration of the physical karmic predispositions.

When you are endowed with the meaning of this realization,
Like being able to move by leaping like a lion,

The great transparent primordial wisdom,
Without the appearances of the intermediate state's production and cessation,
Penetrates into the precious enclosed spaces [of awareness], and
Therefore abides in the great primordial freedom.

The luminously empty awareness at the level of the ground is the un-produced and spontaneously present 'mother' clear/radiant light. One's own un-produced and empty natural radiance is the self-emergent 'child' clear/radiant light. These two are re-united (*gud 'brel*) through opening/separating the radiance and luminosity. Although these two are integrated when you become free from corpulent physicality, you [still] take hold of the place that is your own maternal bed. These are not separate awarenesses, however, since it is a matter of whether one is free or not free from the net of corporeality. The door of primordial wisdom is the awareness that distinguishes between luminosity [of the ground] and radiance [of self-emergence], and hence [111] the analogy of a son occupying a mother's womb is used.

CONVICTION: THE REAL ESOTERIC INSTRUCTION

If you do not convict [all phenomena] into the expense of your own bed right now,
You will never be released into the primal ground in the future.
Not being released into the ground or expanse of awareness, a contemplation that is entangled with worldly concerns
Will never cause you to obtain liberation, only birth as a god of high status.
Therefore, right this moment and in the future, within the interior expanse,
Cherish the conviction of the naturally abiding depth contemplation this instant!

If you do not recognize the natural contemplation as your own originally pure place, although your meditation may be stable, it is similar to that of a god in contemplation. Therefore, you will not be able to become free and, being bound again, you will be forced to take birth in the upper realms. It is stated in *The Commentary of the Whispered Caste (snyan brgyud ti ka):*

Although you may know how to meditate, you do not understand freedom.
How are you different from a god in contemplation?

Therefore, having taken hold of your own site of awareness in that luminously empty interior expanse, as soon as you shed this mortal coil, you are integrated into a state that is indistinguishable from the spontaneously present precious Reality-Gestalt, whereupon the two Form-Gestalts spontaneously accomplish the aims of sentient beings. Furthermore, one takes hold of the wisdom energy of the depth intention that rides upon the wind of non-activity, and when breathing ceases—i.e., the final exhalation is sent outwards and not inhaled again—the radiant internal awareness becomes separated from [coarse] winds. Thus, in the absence of the mind of karmic predispositions, by recognizing the manifestation of the sky-like depth intention radiance of the internal Reality-Gestalt as your own essence [i.e., the essence of awareness], you become awakened through the higher transparency in an instant. Concerning this, it is stated in *The Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol):*

For example, the Great Garuḍa (*khyung chen*), the king of the birds,
Subjugated (*zil gnon*) the nāgas straight from the darkness of the womb and
Achieved his full extent by breaking through the interior of the egg with his wings.
Once free from the confines of the egg, he eliminated even the external nets with the flapping of his wings—
How could such comfort and ease be appropriate for other birds?
It is appropriate for the Great Garuḍa himself, who is at ease and comfortable in the sky.
Whether or not one realizes it, there is freedom and release.
Without any distinction between the present and future lives, this is balance.
Within the range of balance/equanimity, there is uninterrupted continuity.
For those who wish to become free through the traditions of the nine vehicles,
Who train very well, and abandon the objects to be abandoned, and who desire to transform themselves—
Where do they belong? They are at ease and comfortable in the Great Vehicle. [112]

Why is it comfortable? Everything is the great bliss, the vortex of the Reality-Gestalt, and
There is no one who does not become free within the vortex of the Reality-Gestalt!
The natural arising of reality is the indestructible gestalt of the enlightened nucleus.
The dynamism of the enlightened nucleus is fulfilled in and as the predispositions of the body.
There being no birth, death and intermediate state, you shed this mortal coil, whereupon
Unitary awareness is inseparable from everything, and so
The emanations arise continuously and
Completely engage in everything without any hindrance.
This is the sphere for the yogic activities of mounting the wind of non-activity.
This is not appropriate for those who rely on the inferior vehicles.
Ati-Yoga is taught only to the intelligent—it is the vital point of the result.

Even though being bound by the confines of an egg, he subjugated the nāga beings, and, since his wings were already fully developed, was able to fly in the sky. Similarly, a yogic visionary also subjugates the lower eight vehicles by means of resting in the King of the Vehicles and, having eliminated the abyss of saṃsāra by means of one's realization, is able to move about freely within the sky of reality. Just as a bird can fly through becoming free from the confines of an egg, [a yogic visionary] becomes awakened through becoming free from the confines of the coarse body.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

All phenomena are convicted into spontaneously present awareness.
Spontaneous presence is convicted into the great original purity of one's own bed.
Original purity is convicted into a state that is devoid of observation, thought and expression.
This is the conviction of definitive spontaneously presence.

Initially, all phenomena emerge out of awareness, and finally they are convicted into the range of spontaneously present awareness. They are convicted into the expanse inside the spontaneously present original purity, i.e., one's own bed of the Reality-Gestalt, and they are convicted into original purity free from all extremes, the great site of freedom beyond all mental and linguistic expression. It is stated in *The String of Pearls (mu tig phreng ba):*

> Freedom is the very first thing.

And it is stated in *The Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol):*

> "Undifferentiated," you are released into the spontaneously established vortex.
> A "seamless unity," you are released into the vortex of the seminal nucleus.

CONCLUDING VERSE TO THE THIRD CHAPTER

> The spontaneously present open space of the enlightening mind,
> The primal expanse in which all phenomena primordially naturally manifest and naturally dissipate into that is the primal expanse,
> The nature of the singular seminal nucleus, and the meaningful dimension of the enlightened nucleus—
> I have explained this in the precious commentary disclosing the third topic.

> The virtuous gods (*dkar phyogs lha*) and [113] the vow-holding protectors,
> Holders of the Vajra-Caste who have powerful faith in the Awareness-Holders,
> The ocean of ḍākiṇis and the gods who depend on the supreme spiritual accomplishments, and
> The assembled glorious protector-gurus should all rejoice!

(From within the Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality, this has been the commentary on the third adamantine topic: "Delineating all phenomena in and as primordial spontaneity.")

DELINEATING ALL PHENOMENA IN AND AS THE UNITARY SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

INDICTING ALL PHENOMENA INTO UNITARY PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

FIRST: THE ORIGIN OF ALL PHENOMENA IS IDENTICAL

> **Then, the nature of solitariness (*gcig pu*) is disclosed.**
> **The unitary awareness is the ground of all phenomena.**
> **Although it appears as a multiplicity, it is said to never waver from solitary [awareness].**
> **Self-emergent primordial wisdom is taught to be the unitary source.**
> **Although a single jewel, due to the individual conditions of fire and water, appears as different things,**
> **Their basis is identical—a piece of pure lapis lazuli.**
> **Similarly, although saṃsāra and nirvāṇa both manifest out of the unitary intrinsic intelligence,**
> **The origin is identical—it is the ultimate enlightening mind.**
> **The difference between awareness and ignorance is merely illusory.**

A single lapis lazuli jewel arises in the form of fire or water in dependence on the individual conditions of the sun's or moon's shining. Similarly, although the very solitary awareness manifests as the appearance of saṃsāra due to not recognizing its essence, or as the appearance of nirvāṇa due to recognizing it, these appearances do not differ in essence, nor do they waver from the awareness' playfulness or mode of manifestation. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> The origin of all phenomena is identical in and as the enlightening mind;
> All Buddhas, sentient beings, appearances and their fictive interpretations, i.e., the environment and the beings therein
> From the point of the enlightened essence that gives rise to everything,
> Are absent as any single thing—if you were to count them, their numbers would be impossible to express.

The enlightened body and speech of the Buddhas, and even the bodies and speech of sentient beings
Are the enlightening mind, free from dualistic notions of subject and object.
That which is present, separated from the dualism of subject and object,
Establishes everything [since] it is the origin of phenomena. [114]

THE UNITARY EXPANSE OF EVERYTHING IS SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

All factors that appear in the face of awareness, i.e., appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,
Are identical in that their own essences are empty from the moment they appear.
Like a dream, an illusion, or the moon appearing in a body of water,
Like awareness of the four visions, like the atmosphere devoid of materiality,
They are unitary in being primordially empty, thoroughly empty, and free from conceptual elaborations.
Since everything is primordially pure within the singular expanse,
So-called "duality" does not abide anywhere—everythingis included within the unitary seminal nucleus.
It's the corner-less Reality-Gestalt baby! E Ma Ho!!

All phenomena of appearances and their fictive interpretations are a single expanse in and as the emptiness that is vividly appearing absence. Awareness' own natural luminously essence, luminously empty like the sky, free from conceptual elaborations, is the singular open space. Both awareness and the emptiness of appearances, non-dual, un-fragmented and empty, are the same identical flavor within the singular seminal nucleus.. Therefore, it is said that, "within the singular seminal nucleus of the Reality-Gestalt, the round corner-less expanse, origin [of all phenomena] is identical." It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

The origin of all phenomena is universal creativity—the enlightening mind.
Whatever appears is my essence.
Whatever occurs is my magical display.

PURE EQUALITY: SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

Appearances in terms of the five elements are the range of the enlightening mind—
They never waver from the unitary un-produced equality.
Even appearances in terms of cyclic existence, transmigrating beings and so on, are empty forms—
Manifesting on the ground, they never waver from the range of awareness.
Even the appearances in terms of happiness and sorrow are the range of the nucleus of enlightenment—
They never waver from the unitary self-emergent primordial wisdom.
Therefore, phenomena are of the singular expanse, the empty range, and
Should be recognized as being the un-produced enlightening mind.

Although [the dynamism of awareness] appears in terms of the five elements, they manifest from the range of awareness, they appear in that range, and they dissolve into that range. Although it appears in terms of sentient beings, they manifest from within the range of awareness, they appear in that range, and they dissolve into that range. Therefore, they are all natural empty forms. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Hey great spiritual hero!
Mind is the essence of just what it is.
Just what it is—non-dual and extremely pleasant—
Is endowed with every form, yet is thoroughly devoid of forms.
The primordial sky-like freedom from conceptual elaborations [115]
Is beyond the objects of observation, and being "one," it cannot be categorized.
Even though the enlightening mind defies categorization or demonstration,
Enumerations and categories arise with respect to phenomena/doctrines created by the mind.
If you were to ask, "What is created by the mind?" I have taught that

> Appearances and their interpretations, i.e., the environment and the beings therein, Buddhas, and sentient beings
> Are created through the natural essence of the mind, and thus
> Manifest and become evident.
> The appearances of the five great elements and the six classes of transmigrating beings and
> The two types of Form-Gestalts that accomplish the aims of those beings
> Are categorized only after the nature of the mind has been purely sent forth.

Accordingly, awareness, space-like luminous emptiness, is the sphere of the primordially pure Reality Gestalt, the great emptiness that possesses all aspects, the clear/radiant light endowed with the supreme of all aspects. Within this sphere, whatever appears, whether the impure saṃsāra or the pure nirvāṇa, is the dynamism of awareness' self-presencing. The presencing of the ground, however, never wavers from the range of awareness. Even if it appears impure, never being present in actual fact, it is primordially awakened, and its mode of appearance is also purified into the three spiritual gestalts. It is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

> Furthermore, due to these conditions
> There is not even one sentient being that is not awakened.
> Since phenomena accord with the self-emergent primordial wisdom,
> Saṃsāra has never been present from the very beginning.
> Therefore, each sentient being is individually awakened.
> The realization relating to birth itself is that
> Abiding in the womb is reality's expanse,
> The meeting of the mind and body is the connection between the expanse and awareness, and
> Abiding in the body is the three spiritual gestalts.
> Through old age, all phenomena are exhausted and distorted appearances cease.
> Through sickness, phenomena are experienced.[232]
> Through death, emptiness does not have to be identified;
> Therefore, sentient beings are Buddhas.

THE SITE OF AWARENESS' REPOSE: THE GREAT OPEN SPACE

Within this actual expanse, which is the great vortex of intrinsic intelligence,
Rests the singular depth intention of the Conquerors of the three times.
It cannot be observed or imagined in terms of being a multiplicity, and is free from compartmentalization and conceptual elaboration—
It is the palace of the unwavering enlightened essence
Where nothing but the self-emergent primordial wisdom itself resides. [116]

The meaningful expanse of the great empty originally pure essence of awareness is the Reality-Gestalt is your own face free from conceptual elaborations. The pure and total enlightened nucleus is said to be sacred palace of self-emergent primordial wisdom. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Since my nature is free from elaboration and indivisible,
I created this site Reality's expanse.
Apart from enlightenment itself, nothing else abides there.

Since my nature is un-obscured and all-pervasive,
The spacious luminosity is the primordial inconceivable mansion—
Apart from self-emergent primordial wisdom itself, nothing else resides

SUCHNESS: THE EXPANSE IN WHICH SAṂSĀRA AND NIRVĀNA AND THE THREE GESTALTS EMERGE

The source of all that one desires, the precious jewel that is the treasure of Dharma
Is the spontaneously present three spiritual gestalts—the pure land of the Conqueror.

The range of awareness is the pure land of all the Conquerors. Not being recognized, it appears as the six classes of transmigrating beings and saṃsāra. In reality, however, it is the self-presencing of the three spiritual gestalts. Although it appears as the pure phenomenon of nirvāṇa, it is really the self-presencing of the three spiritual gestalts. It is taught that nothing goes beyond the sphere of the three non-dual spiritual gestalts. As for this, it is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

> Moreover, since the three realms and sentient beings
> Can scarcely go beyond ordinary body, speech and mind,
> There is no need to search for the three spiritual gestalts somewhere else.
> Even if you search for them, there is no place you will find them.
> They have never occurred, nor will they ever occur in the future—
> It would be truly amazing to see anything by looking at that!
> The really marvelous playfulness
> Does not distinguish between Buddhas and sentient beings.
> Just like a cloud in the sky,
> Naturally emerging and perfect within itself.

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Since I myself am the enlightened nucleus that gives rise to everything,
> The five great elements, the three realms and the six continuums of beings
> Are nothing other than my enlightened body, speech and mind. Therefore,
> They are my nature and my array.

And it is stated in *The Vajra Castle (rdo rje mkhar rdzong)* composed by the great master dGa' rab rdo rje:

> In the infinite totality of the immutable Reality-Gestalt devoid of objects,
> The manifestations of interior, exterior, the environment and beings is the perfected Enjoyment-Gestalt and
> The reflection-like appearances are the Emanation-Gestalt.
> Since the three spiritual gestalts [117] are perfected as the ornamentation of awareness without phenomena,

Everything is the manifestation of the enlightened body, speech and mind.
Even the innumerable bodies of the pure lands of the Ones Gone to Bliss
Emerge from just that, and hence the mind-as-such is the vortex of the three spiritual gestalts.
Even the origin of saṃsāra, the city of the six classes of transmigrating beings
Emerge from just that, and hence karmic predispositions are the narrow passage of the body.
Even the sufferings that appear in the form of the dyad of birth and death
Dissolve into the vortex of the body and mind, and hence they are devoid of transition or transformation.
Since the mind is devoid of birth and death, it is like the sky.
Since the body is devoid of a core essence, it is like bubble of water.
Since the body and mind are non-dual, they are like a Vajra.
Since everything is awakened within the indestructible enlightened nucleus,
They do not degenerate, nor can they be destroyed by adverse conditions—
The immutable and indestructible Gestalt of Vajradhāra—
Like a venerable lord—is not understood by anyone at all.

THE SINGULAR ORIGIN

No one has manufactured the singular great open space of awareness.
All phenomena without exception completely emanate from that.
Since it subverts ordinary notions of causation, the emanations from the origin are identical in terms of the ground.
That itself is the wide-open reality of luminous emptiness—
It shines within the clear sky that is devoid of polarization and fragmentation.

By looking at how and what things occur through all your attempts to negate saṃsāra and attain nirvāṇa, you encounter the luminously empty awareness. They dissipate into the naked transparency in which all phenomena are exhausted, like a vast open sphere of space. It is stated in *The Tantra Without Letters (yi ge med pa'i rgyud):*

The actual meaningful essence, the very awareness itself
Is not manufactured, so where would the manufacturer be?
It is not fabricated—there is no owner who fabricates it.
It is not a 'view'—it is free from doctrines that are means for viewing.
It is not seen—it is a completely luminous means for seeing.
It does not cause things to appear—it is free from the polarizations of appearance.
It does not diminish—it pervades the ten directions without hindrance.
It is not involved with exertion—it is free from doctrines of striving and accomplishment.
It is not solitary—nevertheless, it is free from multiple phenomena.
It is not a means for viewing—it transcends both eternalism and nihilism.

UNITARY AWARENESS: REALITY'S EXPANSE

Although the unitary self-emergent awareness created saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in their entirety, [118]
Awareness, which is the source, has not been created by anyone at all.
Like the sky, it rests in a state beyond stressful activities.
Since the analogy accords with the meaning, the unitary expanse that is the range of the great openness
Pacifies all the reductive strategies of reification and negation.

Through not realizing the enlightening mind of the sky-like awareness, saṃsāra is created, and it appears as the environment together with the beings therein. Through realizing it, nirvāṇa is created, and it appears as the spiritual gestalts and primordial wisdom. Although awareness has created everything, no one at all has created unitary awareness—it has abided spontaneously from the very beginning. An analogy for this is the sky; the significance is awareness; the sign is the unimpeded manifestation [of everything] from within the enlightening mind. You should try to understand by means of these three. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:[233]

I am the teacher—the all creating enlightening mind.
The enlightening mind is the All Creating King.

The Buddhas of the three times were created by the enlightening mind.
The sentient beings of the three realms were created by the enlightening mind.
Appearances and their interpretations, i.e., the environment and the beings therein were created by the enlightening mind.
It creates harmony between cause, effect, analogy, significance and reason (*gtan tshigs*).
At the time of the cause, it created the five great elements.
At the time of the effect, it created the sentient beings of the three realms.
At the time of the analogy, the sky serves as the universal analogy.
At the time of the significance, lack of production serves as the universal significance.
At the time of the sign, the enlightening mind is the universal creator.
At the time of reason, the self-emergent primordial wisdom can be taught.
It creates harmony between cause, effect, analogy, significance and reason.
The enlightening mind created everything, but its singularity was not created.
It created everything—everything is created through the nature of the enlightening mind.
There is nothing to be done with regard to this very uncreated unity.
Without realizing my nature, the nature of universal creativity,
Through decisively analyzing the phenomena that I created,
Appearances become present through the force of passions and attachment.
They are impermanent, illusory by nature, and will in time disintegrate.
In nature, it is like a blind person who does not know what is going on.

THE ESSENCE/FACE OF AWARENESS TRANSCENDS THOUGHTS AND EXPRESSION

Within the meaningful enlightened nucleus beyond the extremes of presence and absence,
All phenomena, whatever manifestations of the unobstructed playfulness of awareness
Are your own face—the essence of awareness which is the inconceivable and inexpressible open space.

They are beyond all conventional terms and words. [119]

Whatever appearances of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa may manifest from with the range of awareness are not at all established in the essence, the ground presencing, your own originally pure bed, the spontaneously present expanse, the self-emergent primordial wisdom. It is stated in *The String of Pearls (mu tig phreng ba):*

Within the original purity of the absolute very beginning,
Even the mere term "distortion" is not expressed, and
So [in that context], what could the term "non-distortion" possibly mean?
Therefore, distortions have been pure from the very beginning.
Within the great presencing in terms of the ground,
The designation "ignorance" is absent, and therefore
Distortions have never been present.
Since the "intellect" cannot be designated at all,
Even the name "distorted defilements" is absent.
Since names, letters and words are all absent,
The distortions of designation have never been present.
Since consciousness of phenomena cannot be designated with terminology,
Even the name of "distorted intellectual designation" is absent.
Since the mind is not established in terms of mentality,
The distortion that causes movement is intrinsically absent.
Since the subtle and coarse defilements are non-dual,
The distortions of conditions for arising have never been present.
Since agents and actions are non-dual,
Where would the distortion of grasping at objects be located?
Since objects and sense faculties are non-dual,
The distortions based on subject and object are absent.

ALTHOUGH EVERYTHING APPEARS IN THE SINGULAR AWARENESS, IT HAS NEVER WAVERED FROM THAT SINGULARITY

Within the enlightened nucleus that gives rise to everything

There is no duality; if you were to try and categorize it, it could never be expressed.
Buddhas, sentient beings, appearances, their interpretations, the environment and the beings therein all light up, but
They never waver from the unitary reality, just as it is.

From within range of the totally inexpressible essence of the singular awareness the inconceivable and innumerable appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa manifest, and when they manifest, they never go beyond the range of the non-duality of subject and object. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Within the enlightened nucleus that gives rise to everything
> Things do not exist singly, yet there is no way to calculate their numbers.
> The enlightened body and speech of the Buddhas, and even the body and speech of sentient beings
> Are the enlightening mind—they are primordially free from dualistic notions of subject and object.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION OF [INDICTING ALL PHENOMENA INTO] SINGULAR AWARENESS

The phenomena that are completely connected to the singular awareness [120] are perfected—
This is the greater quality of the enlightening mind.
From the moment that anything appears, conventional superimpositions are eliminated.
You should recognize all external phenomena
As the natural radiance of the empty and non-dual mind-as-such, and
Internal phenomena as the unadulterated awareness.
You indict all these phenomena into reality devoid of identity and multiplicity,
Into the vital point of awareness—the eternal singular expanse.

By recognizing all phenomena that appear as external objects as the enlightened qualities of the natural radiance of awareness that are like the light inside a crystal, you become separated from the intellect that grasps at things as being "other." Through realizing that objects of apprehension are not established, [and that] internal phenomena are the naked transparent awareness like a mass of crystal emerging (*bud pa*), the grasping mind disappears—the original purity consumes all phenomena. Through realizing that external objects and internal minds are the non-dual expanse of the playfulness that is the self-presencing of the enlightening mind, all phenomena become identical in flavor within reality—the self-emergent primordial wisdom. As for that, it is stated in *The River of Perfect Self-Emergent Power Tantra (rdzogs pa rang byung dbang gi chu bo'i rgyud):*

> The Reality-Gestalt—the range of emptiness,
> Self-emergent primordial wisdom is the non-conceptual expanse—
> Is revealed to be luminous emptiness, the enlightened core of awareness.
> The primordial wisdom of emptiness and selflessness and
> Spontaneously present phenomena are the Great Perfection.

And it is further stated in *Encountering the Three Spiritual Gestalts (sku gsum thug phrad):*

> The expanse of reality is a precious jewel that gives rise to whatever you may desire.
> Since everything naturally arises without having to exert yourself,
> Self-emergent primordial wisdom is the splendor that transforms into all that you desire.
> The origin of everything all together is the enlightening mind.
> Since it is a seamless unity, the enlightening mind is non-dual.
> Since it is devoid of self and other, it is reality's expanse of equality.

ARRESTING ALL PHENOMENA INTO UNITARY SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

ARRESTING APPEARANCES AND COGNITIONS THEMSELVES INTO SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

> **All phenomena are arrested into the critical nexus in which they are all the same taste.**

All appearances of external objects are false appearances and are the range of emptiness.
Let yourself go into that unitary space in which whatever appears is not manufactured—
As soon as anything appears, it is the manifestation of the unique luminous emptiness.

The moment anything whatsoever appears, by resting in awareness' own natural radiance within the great luminous and unobstructed absence of grasping, [121] the luminously empty reality free from conceptual elaborations dawns. As for that, it is stated in *The Sky Going Great Khyung (khyung chen):*

As soon as you recognize an appearance, arrest it into a state between causes and conditions,
Free from elaborations and naturally shining—the great self-emergent nexus.

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

The complete un-produced and thoroughly pure depth contemplation
Does not rely of the conditions of cultivation or non-cultivation—
The objects of meditation are all phenomena, whatever may appear.
Since the technique for placing yourself into this state is completely absent,
You meditate by simply resting in your own place, without searching for anything.

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

I—the All Good—teach that
Within the mind-as-such, in which apprehended objects are absent,
Pure unobstructed appearances
Are called the "the depth contemplation of the great playfulness."

ARRESTING MANIFESTATION AND DISSOLUTION INTO SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

Thought patterns of minds and appearances are the naturally luminous range of emptiness—

Place whatever movement there is into an easy natural flow.
From the beginning of movement and emanation, reality manifests in and as the depth intention.

However the mind moves, if you recognize it as the playfulness of self-emergent primordial wisdom, like water and waves, since you are relaxed, you are released into the absence of duality between [mental] movement and stasis. It is stated in *The Sky Going Great Khyung (khyung chen):*

You arrest [all phenomena] into the interval between phenomena and imagination—
The nexus in which any magical displays of mind or experience can appear.

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed gyal po):*

Withinenlightenment—reality which requires no cultivation—
Meditation and the object of meditation are non-dual, and hence
Placing yourself into your own nature free from meditation is meditation!
The ultimate, universal dimension is the absence of production.
Through understanding that distorted conceptuality and concrete characteristics are similar,
All mental fluctuations, such as ego-driven memories and thoughts,
Never diverge from the range in which production is absent. Hence,
When you understand that whatever you think is meditation,
Whenever you place yourself into non-meditation, you will not become distracted.

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

I—the All Good—teach that
Within the mind-as-such in which ego-driven memories are absent,
The naturally dissipating/purified agents of disruption
Are called, "the contemplation that naturally releases grasping."

ARRESTING [EXTERNAL OBJECTS AND INTERNAL MINDS] INTO THE NON-DUALITY [122] OF STASIS AND MOVEMENT

There is no boundary between external objects and internal minds;
right in their moment of equality
They naturally dissipate without a trace, and rest in a space free from
focusing your attention on anything.
The primordial wisdom of Special Insight meditation shines forth
from the dimension of the radiant range of awareness.

Through maintaining [the awareness referred to in the] two preceding [root verses], a vivid experience in which there is no boundary between external objects and internal minds automatically (*zhar la*) occurs. By focusing one's visual and mental gaze (*ha re ba*) directly on apparent phenomena, it becomes inwardly clear that these are naturally pure and leave no trace. It is stated in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

Through clear awareness looking over at the sphere of reality,
You internally see the awareness that is free from the varied appearances.
Through intrinsic intelligence looking over at the sphere of the multiplicity,
You inwardly discover the great non-conceptual Reality-Gestalt.

As for the mode of arresting [all phenomena into singular awareness], it is stated in *The Sky Going Great Khyung (khyung chen):*

You must arrest your body and speech into the space between appearances and
emptiness without activities—
The critical nexus of the great unsought for vast open space of non-activity.

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Since activities are absent, do not perform stressful activities!
Since objects of observation are absent, you are free from all your fantasies of
meditation!
Let yourself go into the state of mind that forgets conceptual thought—a seamless
unity!

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

I—the All Good— teach that
Within the mind-as-such in which acceptance and rejection are absent,
The non-polarized appearances of natural freedom
Are called, "the depth intention of the great pervasiveness."

SUMMARIZING THE MEANING OF THESE

Through arresting the three vital points into the unitary enlightened nucleus,
Realization and non-realization are primordially equalized.
The non-duality of external objects and internal minds is equalized in and as the Reality-Gestalt.
The non-duality of deviations and obscurations is equalized within the depth intention.
Any and all fissures being absent, you take hold of your own actual meaningful place.
Acceptance and rejection being absent, you discover the definitive enlightened nucleus.
Coming and going being absent, you abide in the depth intention of reality.
You are absorbed and perfected within the level that is devoid of transitions and transformations.

Through equalizing the external objects and internal minds of the letting go of appearances into non-duality, you discover the depth intention in which acceptance and rejection are absent. Realization and non-realization are equalized through the fluctuations and emanations of the letting go of awareness manifesting as your depth contemplation. Through this, you discover the depth intention in which coming and going are absent. Through equalizing the deviations and obscurations of the non-duality of motion and stasis into non-duality, [123] you discover the depth intention in which gaps and fissures are absent. Since these three are not different, even this arresting does not diverge from the naturally radiant reality, and hence the six consciousnesses relax into an easy comfortable state. Concerning this, it is stated in *The Sky Going Great Khyung (khyung chen):*

> Comfort and ease (*lhug pa*) are the nexus of the cozy pristine pure place.
> Running (*dkyus*) to your own place, you arrest [phenomena] between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa!

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Hey! You do not have to physically, verbally or mentally exert yourself, nor can you fabricate or observe
> The intensely blissful reality free from exertion just as it is.
> You do not need focus your mind on anything, nor do you have to chase after concrete characteristics—
> Just let yourself go into the blissful dimension of self-emergent primordial wisdom!
> Do not contort your body or subdue your senses!
> You should neither constrain your speech, nor undertake and stressful activities.
> Your mind also never wavers, wherever it goes—release yourself into this range!

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

> I—the All Good—teach that
> Within the mind-as-such in which laxity and agitation are absent,
> The meditation of the Great Equanimity
> Is the so-called "depth intention of the six sense consciousnesses."

These also apply to yogic visionaries who have realized the equality of the three times. As for that, it is stated in the same text:

> When a person does not grasp at the traces of the past and does not have any regard for the the future, but just rests in his or her own place of the present cognition, then all cognition is unified through being integrated into the absence of past and future. This is the so-called "identical essence of temporality."
>
> The yogic visionary who knows the equality of the three times integrates saṃsāra and nirvāṇa into non-duality through the method of the natural exhaustion of memory. Eliminating memories of the past into different types, suppressing the very memories of the future, and releasing (*btang*) the memories of the present into

self-vanishing is the so-called "yoga of knowing the the equality of the three times." Moreover, one who does not focus on previous thoughts, does not focus on the mind of the future, and does not depend on the mind of the present, is a yogic visionary who realizes the equality of the three times. [124]

When someone does not pay the slightest attention (*gzeg ma bskur*) to non-recognition in the past, does not send an invitation (*g.yab ma bor*) to non-recognition of the future, and does engage in abandoning non-recognition in the present, that person is a yogic visionary who understands the equality of the three times.

When someone is not attached to the hatred of the past, does not take up the hatred of the future with an iron elephant hook, and does not put any energy (*ngar ma blud*) into the hatred of the present, that person is called a "yogic visionary who realizes the equality of the three times."

When someone does not amass the clouds of past stupidity, does not till the fields of future stupidity, and does not cause the rain of present stupidity to fall, that person is called a "yogic visionary who realizes the equality of the three times."

One who does not answer to the Buddhas of the past, who does not call to (*khu ma gdab*) the Buddhas of the future, and who does not communicate directly (*thog ma gtod pa*) with the Buddhas of the present, is called a "yogic visionary of the equality of the three times."

One who does not renounce (*sun ma phyung*) the very lusts of the past, who does not eliminate the inclination for the lusts of the future, and whose objects of present lusts are rooted out, is a yogic visionary of the equality of the three times.

One who does not cling tightly to the jealousies of the past, who does not withdraw the mind (*sems ma bsdu*) with respect to the jealousies of the future, and who does not mentally dwell on present jealousies, is a yogic visionary who realizes the equality of the three times. He or she is called the "great yogic visionary who realizes the non-duality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa."

This has been the 'good idea' of the Buddhas, as well as the mental practice of the antidote. Through such a practice, the view, meditation, conduct and result will spontaneously emerge within the singular luminously empty awareness. Concerning this, it is stated in *the Whispered Caste of the Esoteric Oral Tradition (kha gtam gsang ba'i snyan brgyud)* composed by the Master Śrī Siṃha:

> The enlightening mind is like the empty sky.
> Ego-driven memory and conceptuality being absent, it is the supreme of meditations.
> Its own nature is non-fluctuating and completely uncontrived.
> Similarly, the mind of a holy person dwells in suchness.
> The unique Buddha is beyond all description. [125]
> The unique view is free from the extremes of conceptual elaboration.
> The unique meditation is free from the extremes of ego-driven memory and conceptuality.
> The unique conduct is free from the extremes of striving and accomplishment.
> The unique result is free from the extremes of avoidance and attainment.

When one transcends the extremes in that way, the contemplation of the seamless unity dawns. As for the essence of that, it is stated in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

> The Reality-Gestalt is the non-conceptual naturally dissipating meditation.
> When you realize your own meaningful dimension, which is devoid of observable objects,
> That is the great contemplation of the seamless unity, and
> Is taught to be the result of awareness' own natural appearances.

And it is stated in The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud):

> Within the natural and continuous contemplation,
> Lethargy and excitement are absent—amazing!

SUMMARY OF THE MEANING OF [ARRESTING ALL PHENOMENA INTO] UNITARY FREEDOM

'Vast' and 'huge' refer to the enlightened mind of the Conqueror being equal to space.
'The absence of avoidance and attainment' refers to the vortex of the singular seminal nucleus.
'Released into your own place' refers to the absence of both realization and non-realization.
'Gone to the site where phenomena are fulfilled' refers to continuous simplicity beyond the intellect.
At the tip of the unsinkable victory banner,
Shines the sun and moon that illuminate the empty realms.

When transparent awareness nakedly dissolves into primordial freedom, you have arrived at the Reality-Gestalt—the depth intention in which all phenomena reach fulfillment. The sun and the moon of self-emergent primordial wisdom then shine forth from one's realization—the tip of the unsinkable victory banner. Since the great emptiness that is endowed with all the various aspects shines within the range of awareness, it is said that the "ground's darkness that binds saṃsāra and nirvāṇa dissipates." At that time, you become primordially free. It is stated in *The Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol):*

"Undifferentiated"—you are released into the spontaneously present vortex.
A "seamless unity"—you are released into the vortex of the seminal nucleus.
"Anything manifests"—you are released into an indeterminate vortex.

Concerning the manner in which you become released, it is stated in the *Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

Moreover, the reality of freedom dawns.
Since you are freed by means of this vital point, all exertion and striving is consumed.
Since you are primordially free, you do not have to do it all over again.
Since you free yourself, no remedy is required.
Since you are nakedly free, you are released into the one's field of vision.
Since you are thoroughly free, it is your own nature purity.

Since you are free from convention constraints of time, [126] you do not have to meditate.

Since you are free by your nature, you are completely uncontrived.

"Freedom" is just a mere verbal convention.

There being no realization or non-realization, whose docrine is it?

"Free within that," who observes that?

Engaging in the three realms, for whom is it possible?

Reality is free from the extremes of existence.

It is also stated in *The String of Pearls (mu tig 'phreng ba):*

Since you are primordially free, you are way sublime (*'phags*).

Since they are naturally free, all conditions for external objects are exhausted.

Since they are free in their nakedness, appearances are pure.

Since since they are free from extremes, the four extreme views are refuted.

Since you are free in your singularity, you realize the multiplicity.

Since conditions are freed by means of conditions,

I do not[234] rely on doctrines of observation.

Since objects are freed by means of objects,

I do not rely on the duality of subject and object.

Since causes are freed through causes,

I do not rely on the duality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Phenomena are released by means of phenômena, and

I do not rely on words or verbal conventions.

The mind-as-such is released by means of the mind, but

I do not rely on the intellect that seeks to describe and express.

Just as filth can be cleansed with filth

Similarly, purity frees purity.

Poisons are destroyed by poisons,

Iron is split asunder by iron,

A stone breaks another stone and

Wood burns other pieces of wood. In this way

Things serve as their own enemies—

If they were incompatible, they would not be released.

This also applies to the complete purity of the primordial freedom. The same text states:

You will not become free though stressful activity—

You rest in freedom from the very beginning.

Through the union of method and wisdom,

Even your father and mother themselves, your very causes, become purified.

The winds that impel you to take birth stir you, and this is

The intensely blissful intrinsic intelligence of enlightenment.

The seed that arises due to the causes of the five elements

Dawn as appearances [of phenomena] arising from the sphere of emptiness.

The equipoise of the parents' bliss

Is the wisdom that emerges from the skilful method.

When you enter the womb,

The appearance of the calm abiding of intrinsic intelligence dawns.

In seven weeks (*bdun tshan bdun*) the realization reaches its full measure.

Within ten months you will traverse all the spiritual levels.

On the occasion of the birth itself, you will arise as the gestalt body of the Buddha.

The development of this body [127] is the sphere of the presencing of the ground.

Abiding in this body is the ground.

Due to old age, distortions dissipate.

Sickness itself is the confidence of realization.

Through death, you are released into the emptiness of reality.

In this way, the sentient beings who appear in physical form

Are primordially free without any strain or exertion.

E Ma Ho!!

Untransformed by any form of conduct or behavior—appearances are released!

Unsought for through meditation—phenomena are released!

Not realized by way of a philosophical viewpoint—eternity and annihilation are released!

The result is not bound—the natural system is a system of freedom.

INCARCERATING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO THE UNITARY AWARENESS

INCARCERATING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM, THE UNITARY EXPANSE

All phenomena are bound by the unitary intrinsic intelligence.
Although they manifest as the phenomena of appearances and their fictive interpretations, limitless and without boundaries,
Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa without exception, they shine forth from the expanse.
Therefore, initially they are bound by the expanse from which everything manifests.

Since all phenomena manifest from the range of awareness, even when they initially manifest, they are bound by unitary awareness. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

This enlightened nucleus in which causes and conditions are absent
Completely controls everything—it creates everything.

INCARCERATING WHATEVER APPEARS INTO AWARENESS

At the present moment, right from the time diverse phenomena appear,
They have never wavered from the range of awareness to some other place, and thus
Appearances are bound by the open space of self-emergent awareness.

Even right now, whatever appears appears in and as awareness' own face, and it bound within the essence of awareness. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

"Being" refers to being the enlightening mind;
"Abiding" refers to abiding within reality's expanse;
"Radiating" refers to radiating with the sky of awareness.

IT THE END [ALL PHENOMENA] ARE INCARCERATED WITHIN THE UNITARY AWARENESS

Even when [all phenomena] fade into the expanse in which demarcations of manifestation and dissolution are absent,
They never changed from being the enlightening mind into something else—
They are incarcerated by the singular primal reality in which all phenomena are exhausted.

All phenomena finally revert and dissolve into the range of awareness, as in the analogy of clouds vanishing into the sky. The fulfillment [of all phenomena] within the expanse of the Reality-Gestalt, the union of awareness and emptiness—is the incarceration within the great reality. Concerning that, *The Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol)* states:

The mind that strays into distortion grasping at identity [128] and difference is
"Free within singular awareness," released into the vortex of reality.
The hindrance to enlightenment one desires on the path of saṃsāra is
"Freedom is self-emergent," released into the vortex of primordial wisdom.

SUMMARIZING THE MEANING: EVERYTHING IS INCARCERATED WITHIN SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

Therefore, all phenomena re incarcerated by unitary awareness.
Within the enlightened nucleus of unwavering awareness,
Transition and transformation are absent—everything is bound within the actual meaningful nucleus.
It is absorbed and perfected within the immutable uncompounded space of awareness.

All phenomena are concentrated within awareness—the reality of the All Good Mother—and therefore there are no phenomena other than the enlightened mind of awareness. It is stated in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

Within the vast open space of the All Good Mother (*samantabhadrī, kun tu bzang mo*),
All appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, along with the five elements are absorbed.

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Therefore, just as all appearances, their fictive interpretations, the environment and the beings therein
> Can never abide anywhere but within the range of the sky,
> Similarly, since the great open space of the enlightening mind is greater than any object,
> All Buddhas, sentient beings, environments and the beings reside therein.

And:

> I—the All Creating King—never taught any precept
> Concerning phenomena that are anything besides the mind
> To the Buddhas of the past who emerged from me,
> Nor will the All Creating King ever teach a precept of enlightenment
> To the Buddhas who are presently residing or to those who will come in the future.

CONVICTING EVERYTHING INTO SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM

CONVICTING EVERYTHING INTO ACTUAL NUCLEUS IN WHICH FIRST AND LAST ARE ABSENT

> **Within the singular conviction, the very self-emergent primordial wisdom itself**
> **Is the expanse in which beginnings and ends are absent.**
> **Everything is perfected in that, and all conceptual elaboration is completely pacified.**
> **All phenomena dwell within the actual enlightened nucleus of reality.**

From the time of everything's apparent manifestation, everything is condensed into self-emergent primordial wisdom which is devoid of first and last, and therefore, it has never wavered from the range of the actual luminously empty nucleus of enlightenment. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> It never wavers from inside oneself and there is no internal object you have to look for.

Objects form externally, and yet there is no observation that concentrates on objects.
Selfless compassion that neither arises from or engages [those objects]
Is not a mistake of another, nor will it become one, but just abides primordially.

CONVICTING SUBJECT AND OBJECT [129] INTO SELF-EMERGENT PRIMORDIAL WISDOM DEVOID OF OBJECTS

In this way, external objects and internal minds, the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,
Are free from having parts and elaboration that come from dividing into coarse and subtle.
They are convicted into the sky-like primordially empty expanse.

External and internal objects of apprehension are partless and empty, but they are natural appearances within the range of awareness. The internal mind also naturally vanishes into non-momentary emptiness, and dissipates into awareness without a trace. Both are purified within the sky-like baseless primordial emptiness. It is stated in *The Great Space: An Unsinkable Victory Banner (mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan nam mkha' che):*

Outwardly and inwardly, and even on just the outward level itself
There is no conceptual object, no matter how profound or minute.
Existence is a mere arbitrary designation, the power of error.

CONVICTING [ALL PHENOMENA] INTO AWARENESS TRANSCENDING DESCRIPTION AND EXPRESSION

If you analyze even the enlightening mind, you find that it lacks concrete existence.
It is not produced, and it does not abide.
It does not come, and it does not go.
It defies description, and it is inexpressible.
By convicting this into the vortex of the depth intention that transcends the intellect
There is no concrete thing with characteristics that indicated by saying "this."

As for understanding by way of terminology, it is inexpressible through words.

Whatever arises or appears out of the naturally emergent primordial wisdom of awareness, whether appearances interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, subject-object duality or a spiritual vehicle, it is concentrated and perfected within the enlightening mind of awareness and concentrated within the Great Perfection. Reality—i.e., the enlightening mind—pervades everything, and everything abides within the range of that. However, since the essence of that [i.e., the enlightening mind] transcends the sphere of mental or verbal elaboration, it primordially abides like the sky. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Hey great being! Listen up!
This is my nature:
"Existence" refers to nothing other than unitary awareness.
"Teaching" refers to teaching in a dualistic aspect.
"Arising" refers to arising as the nine vehicles.
"Concentrated" refers to being concentrated in and as the Great Perfection.
"Being" refers to being the enlightening mind.
"Abiding" refers to abiding within the expanse of reality.
"Shining" refers to shining within the sky of awareness.
"Pervading" refers to pervading the entire animate and inanimate world.
"Arising" refers to the complete arising in and as appearances and their fictive interpretations.
"Teaching" refers to the absence as a concrete thing with concrete characteristics.
In being seen, it is free from being an object of observation.
In being understood, it cannot be expressed in words.
This enlightened nucleus that does not arise due to causes [130]
Is free from all superimposition.
If you wish to definitely realize the meaning of this,
The analogy is designated as being like the sky.
The meaning is un-produced reality.
The evidence is unobstructed mind-as-such.

The reality that is like the sky
Is illustrated by the analogy of being like the sky.
Unobserved reality
Is illustrated and taught without being observed.
That which is inexpressible in words
Is expressed with the word "inexpressible."
That is revealed to be the essence of the unobserved meaningful dimension.
The meaning of the condensed teaching
Is connected with the essence of the meaningful dimension.
You must differentiate realizations of my meaningful dimension thereby—
If you do not realize the meaningful dimension by means of this,
Then whatever terminology and words taught concerning the meaning
Would not encounter me.
Since you would deviate from me and obscure me,
You will not see the enlightened nucleus of phenomena.

SUMMARIZING THE MEANING: CONVICTING PHENOMENA INTO THE GREAT NAMELESS EXPANSE IN WHICH PHENOMENA ARE FULFILLED

All phenomena of appearances which are interpreted in terms of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are convicted
Into the great open space that is nameless and free from conceptual elaborations.
All phenomena of individual intrinsic intelligence are convicted
Into the great open space of un-produced empty awareness.
All phenomena of the enlightening mind is convicted
Into the great open space in which awareness and ignorance are absent.
All phenomena that are primordially and thoroughly empty are convicted
Into the great open space in which transition and transformation during the three times are absent.

All phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa shine from within the range of awareness, primordially free from conceptual elaboration. These are also finally convicted into that. The very site of freedom is called "lofty" according to the explanation in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur)*. All the phenomena of awareness are convicted into the un-produced empty awareness. Concerning this, it is stated in *The Great Unsinkable Victory Banner (mi nub rgyal mtshan chen po)*:

> This amazing incredible wacky zany playfulness of awareness baby,
> It just hangs in the space-like state free from activities.

Concerning all phenomena of the enlightening mind being convicted into non-duality, it is stated in that same text:

> The great spontaneously established bliss
> Is the incomparable primordial wisdom.
> There being no duality between awareness and ignorance,
> This bliss is understood through its own power. Besides that,
> Phenomena do not arise from some other place.

Concerning all phenomena of emptiness being convicted into the absence of transition and transformation, it is stated in that very same text [131]:

> It does not change baby, it just remains whole (*drang por gnas*).
> It is like the sky—limits are balanced and
> Nothing depends on anything else besides this.

Accordingly, within the primordial wisdom of the empty self-emergent awareness, the nature of the originally pure reality in which the enlightened body, speech and mind are uncreated rests in the great luminous emptiness. It is stated in *The Tantra of the Variegated Introductions (ngo sprod spras pa'i rgyud)*:

> Due to having the nature of the indestructible gestalt,
> You rest in the non-disintegrating and immutable range.
> Due to having the nature of Lotus-Speech,
> You abide in the unobstructed enlightened nucleus without obstruction.
> Due to having the nature of the Mind-Wheel,

You dwell within the great non-conceptual contemplation.

It is also stated in *The Tantra of the Great Secret Heart Of All Tathāgatas (de bzhin shegs pa thams cad kyi thugs gsang ba chen po'i rgyud):*

The clear radiant light of the three spiritual gestalts is emptiness.
It is not eternal—it lacks concrete existence.
It cannot be destroyed—it is the spiritual gestalt of clear radiant light.
It is not different—it lacks interior and exterior.
Transparent emptiness is the gestalt of space.
Appearances and emptiness are indivisible and intangible.
This is the enlightened gestalt in which birth, death, transition and transformation are absent.
"Enlightened Speech" refers to the actual speech of the un-produced dimension.
Without speaking in words, it is clear in and as this meaningful dimension.
It is beyond speech, expression and words.
"Enlightened Mind" refers to the purity within the sky of awareness.
The ordinary mind, mind-as-such and its radiance are all absent.
Since sensation is absent, experience is also absent.
Since discriminating awareness is absent, grasping at the "I" is also absent.
Since mental states are absent, the production and duration are also absent.
Since consciousness is absent, distortion is also absent.
Since the five sense objects are absent, the mind that apprehends them is also absent.
Since desire is absent, attachment is also absent.
Since virtue and vice are absent, maturation of karmic seeds is also absent.
The self is invisible—grasping at "I" is absent.
Primordial wisdom shines through the fives sense-doors without distortion.
The nature of everything is equivalent to Buddhahood.
The enlightened body, speech and mind of the Buddhas are stainless.
In them views are absent, meditation is absent, and conduct is absent—
You do not proceed by way of spiritual levels and paths!

ces pa dang/ kun gsal las/

And it is stated in *The Universally Illuminating Seminal Nucleus (thig le kun gsal):*

> The radiant and non-conceptual primordial wisdom is the Reality-Gestalt.
> It manifests naturally to itself, the animate and inanimate world is primordial Buddhahood.
> The two extremes of karmic action and resonating concern are completely purified.
> The spiritual levels and liberation encounter the supreme enlightenment.
> There is no path along which to progress—reality itself is the supreme enlightenment!
> If you wish to make progress, then baby, you are a long way from primordial wisdom! [132]
> While you are not accumulating, the two collections of merit and wisdom are completed from the beginning!
> While you are not purifying, the artificial and innate obscurations are purified from the beginning!

CONCLUDING VERSES TO THE FOURTH CHAPTER

> Within the unitary expanse of everything, the range of self-emergent primordial wisdom,
> All phenomena without exception have exactly the same flavor, and hence
> They are decisively settled into the unitary non-duality. As for the meaningful dimension of this,
> I have explained the precious commentary that explicates the fourth topic.
>
> All the Conquerors who dwell in the ten directions and the three times and
> The Ḍākiṇis, practitioners, Awareness-Holders along with the protectors,
> In short, beings endowed with the fortuitous karma of the supreme doctrine,
> Should all rejoice without exception in this profound and vast situation!

(From within the Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality, this has been the commentary on the fourth adamantine topic: "Delineating all phenomena into the singular primordial wisdom of awareness which lacks any origin.")

ADVICE ON THE CONDITION OF BEINGS WHO UPHOLD THE TEACHINGS

CANDIDATES TO WHOM INSTRUCTION MAY BE GIVEN: THOSE TO BE REJECTED AND ACCEPTED

CANDIDATES TO BE REJECTED

In that way, the heart-essence of the exceedingly profound vehicle
Should only be taught to persons of certain intelligence and fortune,
But not be taught to those on the inferior vehicles, those who are addicted to causality,
Or to narrow-minded people of little fortune.

Even if you were to teach the profound to those of inferior fortune, they would not realize it. Since it does not fit inside the heads of narrow-minded people, they end up abandoning the doctrine. Since those on the lower vehicles are addicted to their own philosophical systems, they generate wrong-views. Since those who are addicted to doctrines of causation always comprehend everything only through karma and cause and effect, even if you teach them the sky-like doctrine, they view it as a topic about which to argue, exaggerate or deprecate. Therefore, since they are not suitable candidates, it is taught that you must keep this unsurpassed doctrine secret. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Hey great spiritual hero! This is point!
If you teach [my secret doctrine] to those involved with the vehicles of cause and effect,
In accordance with mundane doctrines of cause and effect,
[In this context], it it would be like saying that it is not feasible for results to arise from causes. [133]

And:

Do not teach my precepts of universal creativity
To those who follow vehicles based on causation—
If you were to teach them these precepts of mine,

They would say that there is virtuous and non-virtuous karma and cause and effect, and then
They would reduce my authentic being through reification or negation, and hence
They would not meet with my authentic being for a very long time, which would be a bummer.

And it is stated in the *Heap of Jewels Tantra (rin po che spuns pa):*

> You must not express even the slightest part of these words among those such as Hearers and Solitary Realizers! If you ask why that is, it is because they become nervous and scared, and finally they pass out due to hearing all these words. They have no faith in [doctrines of] Secret Mantra—having given rise to this frame of mind they experience the great hells of sentient beings due to the ripening of that karma. Therefore no propagation of the view should be expressed at all even in a mere gust of wind, to say nothing of by teaching or even by hearing.[235]

And so forth, just as it was expressed earlier.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THOSE BEINGS TO BE AVOIDED

These teachings must be kept secret from those who slander the Guru or have anger toward your [vajra] brothers and sisters,
From those who pervert the secret gateway and teach it openly,
From those who have no faith, great greed and bad characters (*ngang rgyud ngan*),
And from those who are attached to this life.

Those who lack proper respect or generate wrong views with respect to their Guru or spiritual brothers and sisters, who proclaim the secrets openly, who have no faith or are excessively greedy, who have bad characters or who grasp at the distorted appearances of this life as being true, and so on, are not suitable as candidates [for this teaching]. You must not teach it to those who are attached to these faults, because they will become enemies of the masters and the teachings of the enlightened nucleus. Accordingly, it is stated in *The Naturally Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar):*

Not showing honor or respect,
Behaving in a manner that perverts Secret Mantra,
Not having the proper caste or lacking a good character,
Being slight in one's wisdom,
Despising (*khyad du gsod*) kindness,
Boasting about one's own caste,
Adorning one's body with fancy ornaments,
Being ordinary and meaningless,
Such people are not designated students, but rather the enemies of one's master.
Do not explain the meaning of the Great Perfection to
Any being who does not take the teachings into his or her experience!

And [134], it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:[236]

Concerning teaching mixed up people who are not the right type,
Those who delight in fame or mundane affairs,
Those who are proud, or who have no respect or shame for sublime,
Those who display or hoard (*'char zhing rdzas*) the teaching, or who have no faith in it,
Those who practice in order to improve their debating skills, or who desire a means to achieve power,
Those who broadcast the [secret] teachings widely, or who are out of sync with them,
Those who, through reification and negation, cultivate a mind that is harmful to oneself and others—
From all these sorts of people you must keep the teachings supremely secret!

SUITABLE CANDIDATES TO BE ACCEPTED

As for those fortunate ones who are suitable candidates for most excellent Great Perfection,
It is permissible to teach to those who are respectful towards the Guru, who have great wisdom,

To those who are open-minded (*khong yangs*), who have very little anger (*spro ring*), and are very generous (*gtong phod che*),
To those whose neurotic conceptuality is minimal, and whose addictions are small,
To those who have forsaken this life, and are intent on attaining enlightenment, and
To those who have faith and energy, and to those who can keep a secret.

You should teach those who are endowed with the all the qualities of being suitable candidates such as those who have faith, respect and generosity towards their Guru, the doctrine and their brothers and sisters, who have extensive wisdom, who are open-minded and have pure characters, whose distorted conceptions which grasp at addiction, purity and freedom, and fastidiousness are slight, whose energy is great and who can keep a secret, etc. It is stated in *The Naturally Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar):*

Those with powerful faith, great energy,
Great wisdom and no grasping or attachment,
Who have great respect, and who conduct themselves in accordance with secret mantra,
Who have no distorted conceptions and for whom the abyss of saṃsāra is absent,
Those vow-holders and those with energy for practice,
Who are always steady (*breng nge dung nge*) and who have great love and compassion,
Who engage in clear (*lhang nge*) and shining (*lhan ne*) meditation,
Who behave in accordance with the instructions of their master,
Who do not take crazy vows upon themselves,
Who act harmoniously with other paths of conduct,
Whose minds are made lucid by means of the mode of respect,
Who are caused to believe (*rjes su 'dzin pa*) through the teaching of a single word,
Who behave accordingly for their own sake,
Who can be trusted with a secret,

Who do not transgress the indestructible meaning,

Who are attentive to persons of great learning,

Who do not go beyond their own dimension,

Who do not boast, but speak softly and pleasantly,

Who operate harmoniously with the transcendental mind (*pha rol sems*), [135]

Who act in the manner of their spiritual masters and the Tathāgatas

Being completely identical with no difference whatsoever.

These are the defining characteristics of a disciple—

Disciples who are so endowed

Are said to be suitable candidates for Great Perfection teachings.

And it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Those with faith, vows, and great energy,

Who have the natural grief associated with compassion and who lack neurotic conceptuality,

Who are completely unattached to, and would faithfully and glady offer

Their own bodies, children, spouses, servants or wealth

Are persons distinguished by having faith and holding vows, and hence

They are to be given [the teachings] which possess the essential meaning.

HOW THE DISCIPLE SHOULD BEHAVE

Therefore, you should delight your Guru through your realization;

Having taken your vows and oaths previously, properly request your teacher, and

After he or she has given you the instructions, you must practice accordingly—

You must get your ass over the level of the Abiding Reality post-haste.

The disciple who is such a candidate should please the Guru through many means prior to requesting this essential teaching, and, having given his or her promise to practice, makes the request. After the Guru gives the instructions, the disciple renounces this life and acts according

to this mode of practice and right now in this life you must convict saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and you must arrive at the abiding reality without fail! It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> If someone attains mastery over the teachings on the enlightened nucleus,
> Then what can mundane concrete characteristics do to him or her?
> If one attains it, it is said that one has "achieved something difficult";
> It is permissible to give the teachings to one who properly fulfills his or her promises.

As for the the things that are to be done in common [with the other teachings], a disciple who is unable to attain realization by him or herself should make offerings to the Guru and, since he or she desires teachings on the doctrine only, constantly thinks of the good qualities of the Guru and the doctrine. The Guru, for his part, also takes hold of and guides (*phreng nge gzung*) the disciple with compassion and, at that time, looks after the disciple like a son or daughter by giving advice and explanations. Neither of them should disrupt the mutual affection by not fulfilling their promises concerning the dynamic capacity of the mind. Concerning this, it is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

> You must greatly cherish the Vajra Master who grants precepts and esoteric instructions
> As you would your uncle, your parents, or even your own eyes;
> You must make offerings that are pleasing to him such as
> Jewels, your small baby or riches and wealth.

And it is stated in *The Naturally Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar):* [136]

> In such a way I must respectfully serve
> The Master who bestows the esoteric instructions
> With my own body, jewels, and extremely rare substances.

And it is further stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> In brief, your body and even your life are objects to be offered and
> What need is there to mention precious substances, fields, or cattle?

> Even if he does not need this stuff
>
> Since it is given with a pious intent, he accepts it and offers it to the triple-gem.

And it is stated in *The Naturally Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar):*

> Do not sever your connection to compassion,
>
> Do not cut the flow of intense compassion—
>
> That's the relationship between the Master and the disciple baby!

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE GURU WHO GIVES THE ADVICE

The Guru who is highly learned and who has completed his education

A Master of the general pinnacle of the indestructible secret mantra should be highly educated and have great compassion. He or she should have perfected the initiations and vows, and must possess the capacity to cause others to become free through his own maturity in the topics of generation and completion stage meditations. Therefore, a guru of the Great Perfection in particular, in addition to these qualities, must have received the empowerment of the definitive the great secret, must be pure in his or her vows, and must be skilled in the tantras, transmissions, and esoteric instructions. He or she must possess the capacity to establish others in bliss through having himself/herself completely perfected the sky-like and completely pure meditation on the view. In brief, he or she should hold the qualified doctrine, a never-disappearing treasure like the precious arm ornament of the victory banner. As for this, it is stated in *The Naturally Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar):*

> The Master who possesses the adamantine meaningful dimension
>
> Must have a good character and an expert in studies.
>
> He or she must have received the empowerment and must assidiously apply
> himself to the meaning of secret mantra.
>
> He or she must have a good understanding of all external and internal activities.
>
> He or she must have achieved a seamless union with the divine tutelary deity.
>
> He or she must be expert in the esoteric tantras of the secret mantra
>
> Containing the meanings of the Great Perfection's esoteric instructions.
>
> He or she must be able to perform all the sādhanas of the outer and inner tantras.
>
> He or she does not transgress the meaningful dimension of the view and

He or she accepts the secret activities of the external and internal tantras.
His or her qualities and talents are like a precious gemstone—
You must behave toward him or her as if he or she were an inexhaustible treasure.

And it is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (sgra thal 'gyur):*

The fully qualified Great Perfection Guru
Is the source of all the talents and qualities—
Grab hold of the enlightened ground of the Great Perfection! [137]

Incidentally, baby, there are also Gurus who you probably want to avoid. Concerning this, it is stated in The Naturally Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar):

Those with poor understanding or great pride,
Those who pursue foolish talk,
Those who do not think deeply on the meaning of secret mantra,
Those whose boasting causes the faint of heart to become discouraged,
Those who have entered a wrong path,
Those who have not seen the maṇḍala of the empowerment with their own eyes,
Those whose vows have become corrupt,
Those who do not give answers to the questions posed to them,
Those of little learning but great pride,
Without investigating such Masters carefully ahead of time, they become deceivers of the disciple—
They are not Masters who can teach on secret mantra, and
They certainly cannot instruct one on the Ati-Yoga of the Great Perfection!
Do not become friendly with these sorts of teachers!

Thus, these losers are to be avoided at all costs.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ADVICE IS TO BE GIVEN

Having investigated and examined the candidates completely, the Master bestows the vital teachings gradually;

They are to be kept extremely secret from those who are not suitable candidates—

The secret instructions are to be sealed off and guarded in the strictest confidence.

The Guru should investigate and examine the candidate who is the disciple and, having engaged in meditation practice for years and months, should bestow the vital points of the teachings gradually but not all at once. If obsequious persons (*kha gsag can*) who are not suitable candidates were to receive the teachings all at one time, then the teachings would become degenerate and their blessings would fade away. Even if those who are suitable candidates were not to become mature in their practices, they would become annoyed or disgusted (blo 'dred pa) with the doctrine thereby, and therefore there would be some fault. It is stated in *Analyzing the Critical Time (dus gnad brtag pa)* composed by the Master Padma (i.e., Padmasaṃbhava):

Moreover, the candidates should be analyzed and then properly given the teachings

Not all at once, but in stages and

The final part of the advice should be concealed from those who are addicted to this life.

Therefore, if a person is a fit candidate for the teachings, then since he or she has respect for the doctrine, he or she should give presents and offerings out of respect and then request the teachings. Although he or she has no desire for material things (*yo byad*), [the guru] knows by transcendental means (*pha rol gyi byed pa*). This is because someone who is not a fit candidate for the teachings does not seek the meaning other than to offer some token flattery, and hence the omens are the same. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Through prior investigation and investigation of one's faith,

[You find that] they have the wealth and riches, and thus they are respectful candidates. However,

You must not teach on The All Creating King to those with

Minds of attachment, pride, or who do not ascertain the minds of others. [138]

Therefore, you can teach these doctrines to those who are proper candidates but must keep them secret from those who are not. Regarding this, it is stated in *The Naturally Dawning Awareness (rig pa rang shar):*

> The meaningful esoteric precepts of the Great Perfection
> Must not be poured into common poor quality vessels;
> If you were to pour the luminous essence intended for those endowed with faith
> Into these poor quality vessels,
> The essence would come to nothing, and both the essence and the vessel would get funky—
> Therefore, keep these teachings concealed from people of inferior intelligence!

As for the mode of secrecy, do not even think about teaching this profound doctrine to those of inferior intelligence, do not breath even a syllable of it out loud, do not let even a volume fall into their hands; even those who are proper candidates are honor-bound (*bka' rgyas gdab*) to conceal the teachings from non-suitable candidates and are advised to entrust (*gtad rgyas dam*) these teachings only to other suitable candidates in the strictest confidence (*sba bar*).

THE PITH OF WHAT ADVICE IS TO BE GIVEN

> **You should bestow the core teachings on the definitive meaning,**
> **To those supreme heart children who are endowed with extremely good fortune.**

As for this, there are two: (1) the actual teachings, and (2) persons to whom they are to be given. The first is the manner in which the enlightening mind of awareness is demonstrated to transcend exertion based on dualistic notions of causality. Again, this has two [stages]: (1) settling by means of the view, and (2) continuing in this dimension by means of the depth intention. Regarding the first, whatever appears in the face of awareness never wavers from awareness and is devoid of benefit or harm. Therefore, since it transcends notions of virtue and vice based on cause and effect, this is the transparent and unique Great Perfection. It is stated in the in *The All-Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> The non-conceptual space-like Reality-Gestalt

Does not conceptualize with regard to me and is it acceptance and rejection are absent;
Acceptance and rejection being absent, it is like the sky;
The sky is devoid of acceptance and rejection, and likewise
The All Good lacks acceptance and rejection;
This absence of acceptance and rejection is concentrated within me.

And, as for the essence of awareness being devoid of cause and effect, again it is stated in that same text:

The enlightening mind is the nature of the sky—
In the sky cause and effect are absent.

And it is stated in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

You will not realize the awakened dimension through virtuous behavior—
If you could realize the awakened dimension through virtuous behavior,
The Abiding Reality of the Great Perfection would just be a big lie.
You will not fall into saṃsāra because of vice—
If you were to fall into saṃsāra because of vice, [139]
Self-emergent primordial wisdom would also be a big lie.

As for refuting these difficult passages (*'phrang ba*), it is taught on the lower vehicles that virtue and vice do exist. Since their followers do not realize the pristine dimension, being addicted to existence qua existence, they stray into distortion, and hence they perceive things in terms of virtue and vice. Within the depth character of the enlightening mind, however, virtue and vice are absent. Whatever hallucinations (*'khrul snang*) that may appear to one who has been seized by a high fever do not exist in fact. Similarly the example of phenomena that are produced and cease is not to be adopted with regard to [the teaching on] non-production. Therefore, you should understand that the analogy of a sprout being produced from a seed is not to be adopted with regard to the sky, and likewise that the erroneous analogy of cause and effect does not apply to the actual essence of the mind-as-such. It is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

Since the Great Perfection is primordially beyond cause and effect,
You will not attain the sublime state of non-action through searching for or accomplishing it;
The teacher of the view of cause and effect teaches the precept that,
Having formed an opinion with respect to the phenomena of mundane concrete characteristics,
One achieves the result through searching for the karmic cause;
Other than the mind-as-such, however, causes are primordially absent, and results are absent too.
Since the enlightening mind is devoid of production,
Through adopting an example used with respect to the things of mundane beings,
You falsely assume that disintegration arises from production, and
Without realizing that the self-emergent transcends cause and effect,
You form an opinion with respect to the phenomena of mundane concrete characteristics, whereupon
You say wacky things like results come about through searching for karmic causes.
Such a vehicle based on cause and effect is one's own precept.
Hey Great Spiritual Hero—Listen up!
The teaching that calls primordial wisdom "primordial wisdom"
Is compatible with the totality of unobstructed self-emergent primordial wisdom—
It refers to primordial wisdom that does not arise from causes and is incomparable.
This primordial wisdom produces everything—there are no phenomena that arise from anything else.
Having formed an opinion with respect to phenomena of mundane cause and effect,
The result of absence will never come about by searching for it.
Since the enlightening mind is not produced by causes,
Do not form opinions with respect to the mundane phenomena of production and cessation!
Since the enlightening mind is not produced by conditions, [140]

Do not adopt analogies with respect to the mundane phenomena of production and cessation!

Hey Great Spiritual Hero!

If you stress yourself out practicing meditation in the hopes of getting something great,

You will not achieve anything great exerting yourself in the practice of meditation—

That great thing you want so badly is self-emergent primordial wisdom, and it has been right here the whole time!

There is no need to achieve the awakening of Buddhahood by means of cause and effect as is commonly held—you will never attain it through practice and accomplishment, and exactly that is universally asserted to be the result of the uncompounded Reality-Gestalt. If you do attain just that through practice and accomplishment, however, then it would be compounded and it would be have to be impermanent. Therefore, attaining it through simply resting in uncontrived reality just as it is accords with the deep intention of all the Buddhas of the three times. It is stated in the very same text:[237]

Awakening is not attained through practice;

It is spontaneously present by just resting naturally without searching.

Do not conceptualize or analyze resting naturally without searching—just let yourself go baby!

And:[238]

Even all the Buddhas of the three times

Are nothing other than the enlightening mind;

The Buddhas of the past prior generations

Previously saw their own unfabricated minds and had realzations on the basis of that;

As for the Buddhas who are presently living,

Their own minds are also unfabricated and

Since they realize this condition of unfabricated reality just as it is,

They also work for the sake of transmigrating beings right now;
The Buddhas who are to come in the future
Will not teach that this self-emergent mind-as-such
Was fabricated in the past;
The Buddhas who are living presently
Arrived at the awakened condition through entering the unfabricated path;
Not realizing that all phenomena, whatever may appear,
Are the enlightening mind,
You will not attain it through any contrivance or practice;
Not realizing this, if you continue to try and attain it through any scheme,
You will not encounter the stress-free blissful dimension
For billions and billions of aeons.
Hey! Since the three spiritual gestalts are not fabricated from the mind,
Then the meaning of manufacturing them occurs
In the sūtras and scriptures that teach on the three spiritual gestalts.
These teach on the three spiritual gestalts, but
They do not teach on the nature of the mind-as-such.
Similarly, concerning the teachings on manufacturing the three gestalts,
Whatever the teacher taught as the way it really is [141]
Is not the definitive meaning—it is the provisional meaning.

Awareness—the naked Reality-Gestalt—transcends notions of virtue and vice based upon cause and effect, and is the transparent (zang ka) dimension beyond the intellect in which all phenomena are exhausted. There is no thinking about it, there is no analyzing it, you just let it all go into its own place. When you do, they become splendid (*sal le*) in their natural radiance, they blaze (*me re*) in luminous emptiness, they become equalized (*phyam me ba*) within primordial luminosity. Since this is their original condition, within the range of that, they are equalized into a natural flow without fabrication or pollution, they are immaculate (*sang nge*) within their natural dissipation, they squirm and wriggle (*shig ge*) within their natural freedom, they shine in their natural purity, they relax (*lhod de*) into their own bed, the five senses fade away naturally, and are suddenly clarified (*har sang*) into freedom from the webs of

conceptuality without any break. By determining the connection between the mind and the three times within the range which is the wide-open space of sky-like simplicity, having equalized [phenomena] into the unobstructed, non-conceptual and naked luminosity, you just rest in that. Concerning this, it is stated in *The Spirit Mirror of the All Good (kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long):*

> The luminous and undistracted range[239] the depths of which it is difficult to measure
> Is pervasive luminous emptiness, and in that you should behave in accordance with the expanse of great bliss;
> Within the single-pointed range, the ultimate is the range of reality's expanse.

And, it is stated in *The String of Pearls (mu tig 'phreng ba):*

> Empty and luminous, luminous and pervasive;
> It is not polluted by thought nor cleansed by mindfulness;
> It is completely free from conceptual elaborations themselves;
> Like the sky, it is pervasive and empty;
> Its natural purity completely defies description.

And it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

> With respect to those friends who understand emptiness whose fortune is equal to that of intrinsic intelligence,
> Those of great fortune who meditate on this
> Take hold of the non-conceptual spiritual gestalt;
> They take hold of the light-energy of my resonating concern, whereupon
> They and I myself become equal in good fortune.

And it is stated in *The Blazing Lamp (sgron ma 'bar ba):*

> Being the unobstructed appearances of the nature of awareness,
> The intellect, delusions and ego-driven memories are completely exhausted;
> Within the expanse in which appearances are naturally pure,
> And also within non-conceptual awareness,

> You recognize [appearances] as unwavering and equal, and hence
> You rest within the naturally pure expanse,
> The expanse in which everything has been equalized,
> Where distorted conceptuality is primodially exhausted.
> Since the words expression and appearances are non-dual,
> They reside in the expanse of the great natural ease,
> Within the expanse in which exterior and interior are absent; [142]
> Exterior and interior being absent, it is transparent, and thus
> It is unobscured without any defilement. This
> Rests primordially as the defining essence
> Of the completely pure expanse
> Within the great primordial original purity.

And it is stated in *The Sun and Moon's Mystic Embrace (nyi zla kha sbyor):*

> With respect to such a cultivation
> Of the realization of the natural Great Perfection,
> Do not search for it! You will discover the meaningful dimensions by just letting go!
> Without conscious cultivation, your experience of intense bliss grows, and
> You directly cognize the nature of awareness itself.
> Whoever encounters just this,
> Even if they may have committed the sins of immediate retribution,
> Become released through meditating on this itself—
> On that there is no doubt whatsoever—I promise (*na ra kan*).

And it is stated in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

> This immaterial Reality in which grasping and attachment are absent
> Is the supreme non-dual depth intention of all the Buddhas;
> You and all phenomena are purified right in your own place—reality which is devoid of stressful activities, and

> You operate on the level of the sphere of reality by way of the contemplation in which everything is absorbed and perfected.

And it is stated in *The Array of Sublime Jewels (nor bu 'phra bkod):*

> Since the essential characteristic of the sky is originally pure from the beginning,
> Materiality is absent within the Reality-Gestalt itself—you do not even have to think about it.
> Within this great wide open space in which exterior and interior are absent,
> The vast reality is free from boundaries and limits and concrete existence is absent.

Without being obscured by so-called "remedies" that differentiate Buddhas' intentions by way of their natural essence, natural radiance, or absence of lethargy and excitability, you let yourself become even and balanced within this vastness. Due to being purified into the continuity of external and internal, you become free from the faults of grasping at the polarized positions of deviation and obscuration. It is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

> The meditation which abides without cultivation
> Illuminates the doors of the senses, but
> Cannot be realized by the ordinary mind.
> The ordinary mind that attempts to analyze consciousness itself
> Is lost in the outside, and is in itself nothing.
> It does not eliminate partiality.
> It gets caught up in making distinctions and has not reached the condition of emptiness.
> It does not interrupt the flow of bliss.
> It has not reached the lethary (*lteng po*) of equanimity.
> The radiance of memory and awareness become relaxed.
> The path of eliminating mistaken practices is empty.
> It moves to and fro within an eclipse; (?)
> It grasps at the radiant factor of aspects;
> It is the means to transform colors and syllables. (?)
> When these do not fall into polarized positions,

This is the meditation of abiding without deviation. [143]
With respect to the manner in which the essential characteristic of meditation
appears
Within the essential characteristic, which is luminously empty awareness,
It nevertheless remains distinct from the nature of awareness;
In it the extremes of subject and object are consumed and
The natural essence of reality is purified;
The manner in which it appears is not distorted but
Within the nature in which causes and conditions are purified,
When materiality and immateriality are purified by themselves,
Then your addiction the the five sense objects will dissipate;
The coarse elements become purified;
Primordial wisdom displays an increasing purity;
That is called reality in which all phenomena are exhausted.

Moreover, since it moves within the naturally dissipating emptiness, initially the grasping at coarse and subtle elements as having concrete existence is purified, whereupon you attain an increasingly high experience of the luminously empty primordial wisdom. Through this, finally the atomic particles of the coarse and subtle elements individually dissolve, and, like a vanishing mist, your corpulent body becomes pure and then everything is consumed within awareness—the originally pure Reality-Gestalt. Having arrived at that place, it is said that you take hold of your own site. Concerning this it is stated in *The Tantra of the Heap of Jewels (rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud)*:

You let yourself go into your own place without any deliberate focusing, and
therefore
No one at all can talk about it
Even if they use all their sophisticated vocabulary relating to the mind;
Understanding of this lights up within the individual's mind.
This very understanding does not appear through familiarizing your mind with
it—
All appearances which are non-conceptual

Automatically purify and dissolve by themselves, whereupon
Everything emerges in its naked direct immediacy (zang ma thal) and
Becomes compatible with the great luminous emptiness.
The inherent potentials of the individual four elements
Of earth, water, fire and wind become invisible and
Disappear into the sky just like vapor;
The varieties of distorted addictions,
Whatever you can think of, are unproduced and
The factors of subject and object stop all by themselves, whereupon
Everything disappears and, having become naturally consumed,
Your own experience becomes lucid and clear—
All embodied beings are also like that.

And it is stated in *The Consequence of Sound Tantra (thal 'gyur):*

As for the limits of the natural Great Perfection,
By releasing all phenomena into their own place,
Appearances, consciousness and reality all become unified, and hence
You contact the complete letting go into primordial freedom itself.
The depth intention of the Buddhas transcends the intellect;
Its concrete characteristics dissolve into their own place and
Are released from the extremes of emptiness and concrete existence;
In it all fluctuations are spent and neurotic conceptuality is absent;
In it the intellect is exhausted and it completely transcends the ordinary mind. [144]

'Break-through' (khregs chod) is the exhaustion of the elements through completing the dimension of original purity, and 'leap-over' (thod rgal) is the purification/dissolution of the elements through the perfection of spontaneous presence. Even though these two are similar to the mere dissolution of the external and internal corporeality, since one is released into original purity in an instant through the individual atomic particles of just that body, the light-body does not appear, but 'leap-over' is the mere factor of attaining the light-body—the great transference. There is a difference between 'break-through' and 'leap-over' in terms of whether or not the light-body is present, but there is no difference with respect to manner in which one

is released into the site of original purity. Such a sovereign of vehicles is able to outshine everything with its radiance and to convict cause and effect [into self-emergent primordial wisdom] in this lifetime. The yogic visionary also, having discovered the measure of confidence of the no-degenerating realization of reality's empty enclosure, destroys the distortions of cause and effect. One who does not rely upon the inferior vehicles and who does not propound conceptual categories of cause and effect eliminates things external to the view in with a great surge, and emerges from the factor by which it is realized that everything is self-emergent primordial wisdom. The lower eight vehicles, however, do not have the capacity to propound such, because they only reach the lower vehicles. These are expanded upon in *The Great Fulfillment of the Lion's Inherent Dynamism Tantra (seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud):*

> E Ma Ho!
> The intense luminosity of appearance's primordial wisdom
> Is separate from the polarized primordial wisdom of interdependent origination;
> The primordial wisdom of the luminous Great Perfection
> Is the highest pinnacle of all.
> As for an illustrative analogy of the Great Perfection's view,
> It is similar to a great garuḍa soaring in the sky;
> Also, Each vehicle articulates many elaborate categorizations with their own voices;
> A lion cannot bay with a fox's voice—his stomach is too big!
> A fox or a monkey cannot roar with a lion's voice—their throats are too narrow!
> The Great Perfection teaches the primordial wisdom of intrinsic intelligence with its own voice—
> The lower vehicles' view is too damned small to articulate intrinsic intelligence right from the start!

Just as a garuḍa first takes off from the top of a rock, if you were to think that when you progress to higher [vehicles] through depending on lower [vehicles], and that later, just like soaring in the sky, that it is appropriate to operate without exerting yourself in any stressful activities, you would be sadly mistaken. Although a person may operate on the level of cyclic existence through training his or her faculties, in this context you should apply the analogy to the time when the garuḍa soars in the sky, but should not apply analogies of every garuḍa

situation. [145] An analogy illustrates only a portion and besides that is not fit to illustrate everything; if it were fit to do so, then it since would be the actual meaning, it would not be an analogy! Specifically, since gods and humans have different faculties, the Great Perfection is a doctrine has primordially settled the question of faculties in a single stroke. Therefore, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Gods, humans and sentient beings generally are incompatible in terms of their faculties;
> For some, there is the teaching on continuous training of the faculties, and
> For some, the facuties are primordially settled in a single stroke;
> Therefore, I teach "meanings with a special purpose."

Similarly, even with respect to the ordinary vehicle it is stated in The Treasury of Manifest Knowledge (*chos mngon par mdzod*) "Some are ready for this right from the start, while others need to be transformed through training."

Since this topic sets forth a condensation and further elaboration of the former four topics, the general topics of the Great Perfection are like four keys to the first four topics that are like four successive precious treasuries, and these keys are also like keys in that they further open the concealed portions in the treasury.

CANDIDATES TO WHOM TEACHINGS ON THE ESSENTIAL DEFINITIVE MEANING ARE TO BE GIVEN

GENERAL TEACHING

As for the general teaching on this topic, it is stated in The Sky Soaring Great Khyung (khyung chen):[240]

> bya bral glen pa'i shugs 'chang blo bde ba/
> spros med nam mkha'i yid can rnams kyis byos/

> Non-activity stops the force of foolishness in its tracks, and is a groovy laid-back head space;
> Those endowed with spacy unelaborated minds should really get into it.

zhes so/ bye brag gi snod ni/ nor bu 'phra bkod las/

DETAILED TEACHING

As for the more detailed discussion on candidates for the teaching, it is stated in The Array of Sublime Jewels (nor bu 'phra bkod):

> Hey Victorious Vajradhara!
> The secret meaning of the esoteric precepts of the Great Perfection
> Is not to be taught to the self-indulgent.
> The Conqueror [who teaches] the definitive precepts [has a pleasant voice like] the
> King of the cuckoos;
> [We] persons who are to be taught just this
> Request you discourse on the essential characteristics of caste,
> The great path of conduct and colors.
> Then, the Victorious Vajradhara,
> Having risen from his depth contemplation,
> Gave his answer to his special entourage:
> Hey you special entourage guys, listen up!
> I am teaching now, damn it, so listen up good!
> As for the feature of caste, this is how it is:
> It is said that the definitive meaning of secret mantra is to be taught
> To those of the great special castes—
> The Royal Caste, the Brahmin Caste, and
> Similarly to the great aristocratic caste. [146]
> Or, if they are not the appropriate caste, then look into their color situation
> Both men and women are perfectly appropriate to teach;
> It is said that one who is endowed with this color
> Is a suitable candidate for the Great Perfection.
> As for the coarse secondary colors and the black color,
> The tooth itself is lumped together with the white series;
> The root of the eye and the mere mind are red;
> Even the great essential characteristic of hair and
> Spirals to the right and is dark brown (kham nag) in color;

[The condition of] having little respect for the body and
The sphere of external conduct are low-class (*tha mal*) colors.
Those words that are uttered indistinctly (*shugs 'byung*) and
Or even all types of words
In fact, anything that is said by anyone at all—
Even those beings who speak in such a way
Are said to be teaching the precepts of the Great Perfection.
Since those are completed in one,
The butcher caste, low-brow merchant caste,
And even the caste of the masses of sweepers and rag-pickers are suitable [candidates].
[The teachings?] are to be completely bestowed without exception
On anyone at all whose caste is low;
The esoteric precepts of the three secret essences
Are the methods for analyzing the caste and color of [prospective candidates?];
And are under me—i.e., nirvāṇa [the state beyond sorrow].
This super essence of the the secret esoteric precepts
Is the royal definitive meaning and is taught like this—
The higher precepts are to be taught
To all beings who are so endowed.

HOW TO PRACTICE THROUGH DIRECTING YOURSELF TOWARD THE TEACHING

The disciple must hold onto the non-disappearing quintessential meaning
As the enlightened nucleus without broadcasting it or causing it to decline at all;
If you foul up the esoteric gateway, you will be punished and
The teaching of the enlightened nucleus will fade away due to reductive strategies of reification and negation.
Therefore, make secrecy and peace of mind your best friends, and

Take hold of the royal political system—the Reality-Gestalt—in this lifetime!

In general, special and excellent disciples—i.e., beings to whom these teachings are to be given—should not propogate the teachings to unqualified candidates, but should teach them to qualified candidates. Specifically, they should not breathe even a word of these teachings to unqualified candidates and, although they may teach qualified candidates, they must examine the candidate and give the instructions gradually. In particular, when candidates to whom these teachings are to be given arise, [147] the misfortunes of existence being absent, they are to be taught gradually, but they are to be given the entire teaching without holding anything back (lhag ma med pa). Then they are sworn to secrecy (*bka' rgya*) and admonished to guard the teachings (gtad rgya) and advised with the words, "Take hold of the non-disappearing essence of the teachings!"; since they are not proclaimed to unqualified candidates, exaggeration and denigration will not occur, so do not accumulate the karma for abandoning the doctrine! Through teaching it to qualified candidates, the essential nucleus of the teachings will remain in the world for a long time, and those ensnared by karma will become released from saṃsāra in one lifetime and will become awakened into Buddhahood. Moreover, if you teach to unqualified candidates, the fault of harming both yourself and the other will occur. Regarding this, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po):*

> Although you do not situate yourself in terms of acceptance and rejection with respect to the essential meaning,
> Non-humans and demons will create obstacles and
> For both [oneself and others] ḍākiṇis and adepts
> Will induce untimely death and fear.
> The essential vehicle disappears due to exaggeration and deprecation.
> Therefore, avoid all persons of poor spiritual caliber!

Also, with respect to the advice to teach only qualified candidates, it is stated in the very same text:

> Since he or she is free from addiction to the mundane and his or her character has been examined,

> The Guru completely accepts [the disciple's] body and resources and
> Whether or not he or she has the capicity, if he or she is possessed of this special sign,
> They may be given the teaching on the essential meaning—the All Creating King.

Also, with regard to giving the teachings to those endowed with the special supreme good fortune, it is stated in the very same text:

> With respect to the oral tradition that disclose the sūtras and scriptures,
> Take hold of their pith meaning without broadcasting it or causing it to become degenerate, and
> The [doctrine of] the All Creating King will definitely be given to you.

Having requested [teachings on] the meaning of the natural Great Perfection, you should praise the benefits of the precepts or advice. As for that, the disciple who is endowed with exceptional fortune must please the revered Guru with honor and respect, and, having requested the meaning of the natural Great Perfection, will attain all the good stuff of the present in the future when he or she puts it into practice. It is stated extensively in *The Great Consequence of Sound Root Tantra (sgra thal 'gyur rtsa ba'i rgyud chen po):*

> To both your main and secondary gurus
> Who are individually completely qualified
> You must offer service by means of your kingdom,
> Your own body, retinues and resources.
> You must serve the guru who is one identical with the Buddha
> By pleasing him with your physical and verbal conduct.
> Serve your teacher by having faith and wisdom,
> By having devotion and an absence of distortions,
> By making no errors with respect to the topics to be expressed and
> By having clear faculties.
> Through such service, good qualities will emerge—
> From [such service to the guru who is] like a wish-granting tree,
> A wish-fulfilling gem or a wishing cow,

You will receive immeasurable good qualities.
With this in mind, serve the guru
Since you will rout the enemy of saṃsāra!

CONCLUDING VERSE TO THE FIFTH CHAPTER

The meaningful topic of the highest pinnacle of the extremely esoteric varjra vehicle
Is Ati-Yoga—the spontaneously present expanse.
Who should give advice on it, who should receive advice on it, and the manner in which such advice should be given,
I have explained this precious commentary that opens up the fifth topic.

From time without measure, great waves of resonating concern
Have pleased the assemblies of gurus, personal deities, and dakinis,
Powerful ones who delight in this teaching, and
Oath-bound protectors.

Due to the Buddha's resonating concern, gods, human beings, and other sentients beings,
Possess unsurpassed and sublime veneration and virtue that operates on the highest level.
They stand in for the Ones Gone to Bliss, and engage in the heart essence of the Great Vehicle.
All such persons should rejoice from this day forward!

gnas lugs rin po che'i mdzod las/ bstan pa gang la bzhag pa'i gang zag gi rim pa gtan la phab pa ste rdo rje'i gnas lnga pa'i 'grel ba'o/

(From within the Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality, this has been the commentary on the fifth adamantine topic: "Delineating the range of persons to whom the teachings can be presented.")

CLOSING

FIRST: DEDICATION FOR THE COMPLETE LIBERATION OF THE THREE REALMS

I have taught in such a way through disclosing
The meaningful dimension of the supreme esoteric Great Perfection,
[149] without holding anything back.
May all transmigrating beings without exception become naturally free
Without any effort within the expanse of the primal sky!

The blazing lamplight of the unsurpassed spiritual method (*chos kyi tshul*) is arrayed and illuminates like the unobsucured core of the sun. By means of this method may all the beings of the three realms understand their own mind-as-such—self-emergent primordial wisdom—to be perfected in and as the great extrodinary natural letting go without anyone making any effort whatsoever! Therefore it is said, "May they become the venerable holy one who resides within oneself—the great Totally Positive Samantabhadra!" Therefore, it is stated in *The Sixth Vortex (klong drug pa):*

Within the mind-as-such which is present in and as the view,
Appearances and their fictive interpretations naturally dawn as the singular awareness, whereupon
The three realms are released into their own places. This
Is fulfillment within the great extrodinary natural letting go.

DEDICATION FOR THE SPREAD AND INCREASE OF THE TEACHINGS

The doctrine that eliminates things external to the view with a vast surge
Is the pinnacle of the vehicles, the expanse of the Garuḍa, king of the birds.
Superior to all other views, may the scriptures of the Ati-Yoga,
The unsinkable victory banner increase and spread throughout the ten directions!

Just as the Garuḍa surveys the earth by his way of soaring in the sky, the Great Perfection, Ati-Yoga, eliminates all external views with a vast surge—it transcends all diffusion or absorption of imagination and thought. As for just that, it is stated in *The All Creating King (kun byed rgyal po)*:

> Just like the great Garuḍa soaring in the sky,
> There is neither elaboration nor absorbtion.

The ultra-pinnalce of all the vehicles is like the peak of the King of Mountains [i.e., Sumeru]. Thus it is stated in *The Natural Freedom of Concrete Qualities (mtshan ma rang grol)*:

> The extremely high pinnacle of the vehicles, the precepts of Ati-Yoga,
> Are the peak of everything just like the King of Mountains.
> The greatest of the great, the totally positive wide open heart,
> Surpasses the insignificant/puny (phran) vehicles with its own force.

ces so/ de lta bu'i tshul ston pa'i gnas 'di nyid rin po che rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo'i dpung rgyan ltar nub pa med cing phyogs bcur dar zhing rgyas par shog ces [150] pa'o/

"May this topic which teaches such a method never disappear but spread and increase throughout the ten directions like the shoulder ornament at the tip of a victory banner." [150]

HOW THE TEXT WAS COMPOSED AND BY WHOM

> **Having been bound with the three series, the nine open spaces and the four rubrics,**
> **The definitive meaning is extracted in terms of the sixteen doctrinal categories.**
> **This explanation of the Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality**
> **Has been well set forth by the positive Infinite Great Open Space [i.e., Long-chen rab-jam-pa].**

If you condense all the doctrinal categories of the natural Great Perfection, they are included within the Mind Series (sems sde), Space Series (klong sde) and the Esoteric Instruction Series (man ngag sde).

To expand on that a little, these are included within the nine Open Spaces (*klong*) consisting of (1) The Open Space of the originally pure essence, (2) the Open Space of the spontaneously present nature, (3) the Open Space in which manifestations are not obstructed in the least, (4) the Open Space which is free from exertion in stressful activities based on cause and effect, (5) the Open Space in which deviations and obscurations are purified right from the start, (6) the Open Space which is primordially pure of meditation on views, (7) the Open Space of non-activity which is free from fabrication and pollution, (8) the Open Space of the continuous wisdom energy of the Buddhas, and (9) the Open Space in which all phenomena are released right in their own place.

All of these can be further condensed into four rubrics by binding them with the four immutable rubrics of the quintessential meaning, namely Absence, Simplicity, Spontaneity, and Singularity. Each of these four can similarly be divided into the four vital points of Indictment, Arrest, Incarceration and Conviction. These are called the sixteen doctrinal categories. These are set forth through openly extracting the definitive meaning. Since, like a precious treasure house, it gives rise to whatever you may desire, it is given the name "Explanation of the Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality," which brings analogy and meaning together.

The expression, "The yogic visionary of the King of the Vehicles, Infinite Great Open Space" refers to the name of the author, since his meditation on the view with respect to the meaningful dimension of reality is a vast open space like the sky. As for the expression "well set forth," since it [i.e., this work] will benefit the transmigrating beings of future generations, the king of esoteric instructions excels all others. [151] Due to teaching the natural essence of awareness that is the wisdom energy of Ati-Yoga, [the Great Perfection] destroys and surpasses all grasping at the extreme views of the lower vehicles, and hence is called the "Great Vajra-Hammer of the Quintessential Meaning." As for that, it is stated in *Surpassing the Six Collections of Consciousness (tshogs drug zil gnon)*:

> Reality's Expanse is where there ain't no three times or any of that production-cessation bullshit—
> You can't change it, you can't divide it up, it's the uncompounded vortex baby!
> Since it pulverizes all your extreme views, we call it the super Vajra-Hammer;

Since it surpasses all polarized positions, we call it the King of Esoteric Instructions!

ENGENDERING JOY IN FORTUNATE LATER GENERATIONS

The definitive meaning, the five topics of the "treasury of abiding reality,"
Is well adorned with vast and profound wealth.
May this [treatise], beautified with a variegated array of words and meanings,
Delight assemblies of fortunate beings.

The treasure house of the Wheel Turning King who has completely conquered the four directions is adorned with the immeasurable wealth and is completely decked out in dazzling arrays. Likewise, the treasure house of the spontaneously present Vajra-Tip shines forth in the individual "stories" *(rim khang)* of the five definitive topics. Within this is adorned with the miraculously profound and vast meaning and superbly beautified by the excellent presentation of an array of words and meanings. I advise the assemblies of future fortunate beings that just this [treatise], set forth as an inexhaustible and precious treasure, serves as the basis for thoroughgoing conduct. Therefore, it is said, "May this bring about true joy!" This ties up the loose ends [of the text] by adorning it with expressions of auspiciousness as a good omen that those who have engaged in the meaningful dimension of the king of vehicles will have the miraculous pledges and that the teaching will abide for a long time. With that in mind, this ornament of benediction activates auspiciousness and virtue everywhere and at all times. It is stated in *Mañjuśrī's Magical Net ('jam dpal sgyu 'phrul drva ba):*

The most auspicious thing of all
Is the famous virtue of auspicious renown. [152]

CONCLUDING VERSES OF AUSPICIOUSNESS

May the empty light of the benevolent sun of auspiciousness
Bring good fortune throughout all the directions and eliminate the darkness of the four continents!

May the amazing incredible and profound dimension of auspiciousness

Reveal the appearance of the excellent doctrine of auspiciousness to all beings!

May a mass of nectar-clouds in the expanse of the auspicious sky
Cause a constant rain of everything auspicious that one wishes to fall!

May the cruising of the auspicious and highest of vehicles
Cause a great rain of auspicious and manifest enlightenment to fall!

Therefore, herein is found the Treasury of Precious Reality—
A treasury of wellbeing and good fortune equal to the extent of the sky,
The profound and vast quintessential meaning of the Supreme Vehicle,
A precious treasury that gives rise to whatever fortunate ones may desire;
Having condensed the essence of the enlightened core of the tantra, transmissions, and esoteric instructions
By means of the luminous sun of empty radiant intelligence
Within the wide open sky in which this mode is to be known,
It was well set forth verbally at Gangri Thökar.
By means of the compassionate light rays of the holy ones and
My powers of analysis and not inconsiderable intelligence
I obtained some mastery over the topic of the super-best object of knowledge;
Intelligence with respect to such a mode is naturally increasing.
The pinnacle of the vehicles, the natural Great Perfection,
Is the site/topic for those extremely fortunate ones in this world—
May it manifestly appear through the compassion of the holy ones
Within those best of countries, India, China and Tibet!
The profound and vast meanings of the esoteric instructions and explanations of the wisdom intention
Of those individual supreme practitioners who combine scholarship and practice in the abiding reality
Were created (i.e., taught) gradually by the trail blazing pioneers.
Having planted the unsinkable victory banner of the Conqueror's teachings, and
Depending on the blessings of the unparalleled Guru and
The amazing topics of the stages of tantra in such a way, [153]

I have composed this Treasury of Abiding Reality as a means to unpack the inner significance without exception
Of the adamantine topics of the natural Great Perfection.
Since the adamantine topics are exceedingly difficult to realize,
[The Great Perfection] is not a sphere of conduct for short-sighted people;
Although my capacities are unable to master the [the meanings of?] the words,
I have explained well in reliance on the holy ones.
Just as even a creeping vine (*'khri shing*) through relying on a Sāla Tree
Is made glorious in its height and greatness, and therefore is beautified,
Similarly, the profound and vast topics are beautified
Through the blessings of the tantras, scriptures, esoteric instructions and the Guru.
Through the broad wing-span of the realization of the beautiful body of intelligence,
The radiant light of contemplation beautifies the clear sky;
The sublime dynamism of the self-emergent primordial wisdom's deep intention
Eliminates the abyss of saṃsāra within the expanse [of awareness].
From within the interior part of of the egg of impartial hearing and thinking,
The Soveriegn of supreme vehicles, the bird of the Great Perfection
Spreads its wings which perfect the great dynamic experiences and realizations, and hence
Settles on the sublimity (*'phang*) of the sky as the expanse which is superior to everything.
Even this vast egg of the body speech and mind does not sway and waver (*shag ma shig*);
Even this Reality-Gestalt of empty awareness is wide-open luminous emptiness;
Even this expanse of reality in which all phenomena are consumed is perfectly direct and transparent;
Even this solitary expanse of everything in its totality is direct and immediate.
Within the nature of the perfectly equal balanced and wide-open sky,
Awareness and emptiness are nakedly integrated into a single continuity;

There is no transition or transformation with respect to luminous emptiness within the unified expanse of interior and exterior;
The regal structure of the Reality-Gestalt has already taken hold of existence—
This is the highest yogic practice is this life—the definitive scripture.
The fleshly body in which is not mentally preoccupied with the primordially pure Reality-Gestalt
Is endowed with the underlying wisdom intention of the Conquerors;
The Lion among men taught by means of that, whereupon he passed away.

Within the primordially empty expanse is the wide-open and empty intellect.
Based on the comfort and ease of the Ground, [154] the mind's comfort and ease is unceasing.
Within the expanse in which all phenomena are consumed, the exhaustion of the intellect is a pleasant experience.
This is the yoga infinite like the sky—E MA HO!

One's own bed, the non-conceptual Reality-Gestalt, is vast like the sky.
The natural contemplation is the unbroken flow of a river.
The entire traditional 'ground-path' structure is traversed through this single realization.
This is the real wisdom energy of the All Good—E MA HO!

Within the pure sky of the self-emergent primordial awareness,
Soars the Great Garuḍa of realization, of the Yoga free from purposive action.
Absence, Simplicity, Spontaneity, and Unity themselves
Are the enlightened nucleus of the uncontrived dimension—E MA HO!

In this great openness of awareness, naturally luminous and spontaneously present,
Whatever appears is the unimpeded dynamism of awareness.
Vividly appearing yet absent, it is mere illusory play.
This is the Great Empty endowed with all forms of expression—E MA HO!

Here in this royal depth intention, unwavering, just as it is,

Is the sphere of equality, naturally manifesting, naturally abiding, and naturally dissolving.

It is pleasant, radiant, and non-conceptual—a sky free from center and periphery.

This is the wisdom depth intention that transcends notions of intervals between meditation sessions (*thun mtshams*)—E MA HO!

The Reality-Gestalt, the immutable awareness of radiant emptiness

Is the pure and complete openness of intrinsic awareness of the primordially pure saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Subjectivity and objectivity are the dynamism of the Reality-Gestalt, self-appearing and groundless—

This is the realization that transcends any symbolic expression—E MA HO!

When you realize that saṃsāra is groundless, that is nirvāṇa.

When you realize that nirvāṇa is a mere designation that is the primordial expanse.

Whn you become free from purposive activity and transcend the ordinary mentation that is the Reality-Gestalt.

When you rest without thought [in reality] just as it is, you transcend mental and verbal elaboration.

When there is clinging to artificial reference points is absent, this is the sphere of the Abiding Reality.

When phenomena are consumed and you transcend the intellect, this is the final meaning/dimension.

When you move beyond the [philosophical] positions of being and non-being, this is the actual freedom from extremes.

When you eradicate the basis for hopes and fears, then you come upon enlightenment.

This is the final, [155] definitive enlightened core—

It is to be taught to the fortunate future generations and

May all those fortunate ones who will follow myself and others

Take hold of the eternal domain on the level in which all phenomena are consumed!
Whoever comes into contact with
This adamantine expanse, the natural Great Perfection of the definitive teaching
The vast openness of reality, completely released without effort,
Is the precious vow that ends cyclic existence.
Therefore, may fortunate persons who engage in this
Generate joy and inspiration and rest in the uncontrived pristine condition!
May they eschew elaborate things and straying into the world!
May they, while in isolation, rely without activity upon the enlightened nucleus!
This is essential, profound advice.
Scrutinize thoroughly and produce realizations in your mind!
Seek protection in non-attachment and destroy the straying that grasps at concrete existence!
Through not focusing on anything in particular, the absence of 'truth' will automatically manifest.
Whatever appears and however it manifests, mind and objects are the crux of the doctrine,
The sphere of equality, naturally flowing without either proof or negation.
Let yourself go into an immutable state—this is the consummation of the enlightened intent.
The manifestation of the traceless naturally pristine state leads you to the point of fulfillment.
Thus, all phenomena without exception, the meaningful dimension of the enlightened nucleus,
Is explained in this commentary on *The Treasury of Abiding Reality*.
May the teachings of the Conqueror spread and flourish, and
May there be good fortune, bliss and excellence in all times and in all places!

This concludes the commentary on *The Treasury of Precious Abiding Reality* that was composed in the palace of the All Good on the slopes of Gangri Thökar by Longchen Rapjam, a yogic

visionary who has gained mastery over topics of the king of vehicles, and who is rich with the wealth of having heard many times the infinite teachings of the Ones Gone to Bliss.

Virtue! Virtue! Virtue!

---

[1] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso rGya-mtsho (May 8, 1995) says that although this text is not a translation of an Indian text, it is meant to be exactly like those texts that were translated from India, i.e., the teachings of Buddha and the teachings of his great followers. The Sanskrit is included here just to keep some habitual tendency in the Sanskrit.

[2] According to Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 8, 1995), there are two "abiding realities" (*gnas lugs*): (1) the conventional abiding reality (*tha snyad kun rdzob bden pa'i gnas lugs*), and (2) the ultimate abiding reality (*gnas lugs don dam bden pa*). Each of the nine vehicles has its respective way of positing the two *gnas lugs*. Here we are dealing with the *rdzogs pa chen po'i gnas lugs*. It is referred to as *dbyings ka dag spros pa thams cad dang bral ba., ko rang gi rang bzhin 'di sku dang ye shes 'dus brel med pa chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs. rdzogs chen gnas skabs nas ka dag dang lhun grub gzung du 'jug pa. de'i nang nas gzhi'i gnas lugs, lam gyi gnas lugs, dang 'bras bu'i gnas lugs. 'di tsho ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad red.*

[3] "I prostrate to my spiritual master, the royal spiritually aware lord of religion who is the primordial savior revealed as the glorious existence of saṁsāra's turbulent existence and nirvāṇa's calm, and the matrix of the primeval perfect completeness of the spontaneous enlightened qualities." Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 8, 1995) identifies this as Longchenpa's root guru Kumārādza.

[4] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 8, 1995) says there are two types of secret: (1) *gab*, something that is hidden by its nature; and (2) *sbas*, something that is deliberately hidden.

[5] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 8, 1995) refers to this homage as the *don dam lta ba 'jal pa'i phyag*, that is the homage of meeting or encountering the ultimate view. In other words, just realizing the view of rDzogs-chen itself is the homage.

[6] At 26.2, another reading for *gsal 'grib 'dzing rtog med pa rang snang bde ba'i shugs* is "Devoid of [distorted] conceptuality that grasps at light and darkness, it automatically appears with an easy, gentle force."

[7] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 8, 1995) suggests that this line may be interpreted to mean that "There is no place (*gnas*) to abide like that within the dimension (*don*) of the Great Perfection." (*rdzogs chen don la de bzhin gnas med pa'o*).

[8] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 9, 1995) points out that the first three lines of the homage are

concerned with the view or the character (*gshis*) of the Great Perfection, while the final line is concerned with the actual practice. The *result* of such a practice does not differ from the ground state of Great Perfection except that on the ground therre is only *shes pa (?)*, while on the level of the fruit, there are "realizations" (*mngon du gyur pa?*).

[9] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 9, 1995) mentions that all phenomena here includes all sa?sāric phenomena, only not *impure* sa?sāric phenomena, since the existence of such would be impossible on this level.

[10] The "Sublime Constellations" (*phun sum tshogs pa)* here may refer to the "Five Sublime Constellations," i.e., (1) *chos phun sum tshogs pa*; (2) *dus phun sum tsogs pa*; (3) *ston pa phun sum tsogs pa*; (4) *gnas phun sum tsogs pa*; and (5) *'khor phun sum tsogs pa* However, Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 9, 1995) says the meaning of "Sublime Constellation (*phun sum tshogs pa*) in this context is "*sang rgyas kyi sku dang ye shes dang yon tan thams cad ma tsangs ba med pa.*" ("The Buddha's body, primordial wisdom, and good qualities, complete without any omission.").

[11] In 27.4, read *brtag* for *brtab* according to

[12] Could this sentence be an assessment of an ordinary being's perception? That is, could these last three lines be rendered: "Even though the three spiritual bodies in which striving is absent are sontaneously perfected/ Within the enlightening mind itself that is devoid of the [existential] abyss/ You [still insist on] thinking (*brtag*) of the mere names of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as being different in terms of cause and effect!."

[13] *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (page 461-462) defines *dgos ched* as "*phan gnod gang rung du 'gyur ba'i don.*"

[14] To pursue the juridical theme of these metaphors, they may be better rendered as "indictment, arresting, incarceration, and conviction."

[15] At that time, the commitment which is beyond any kind of demarcations of being maintained, is the great spontaneity, and the absence, solitariness, and simplicity are all functioning as catalysts to that [great spontaneity].

[16] Read *tshig gi rnam grangs* for *chig gi rnam grangs.*

[17] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 10, 1995) mentions that the difference referred to in this line is the difference between ordinary time (*dus gsum*), i.e., normal conceptions of past, present and future, and timelessness (*dus med*), i.e., time reckoned in terms of the Great Perfection commonly known as *kag dag gi dus.*

---

[18] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 10, 1995) mentions that this continuity (*rgyun*) is not established as a substantial entity (*rdzas su grub pa yod pa ma red*).

[19] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 10, 1995) says that this sound is *"mnyam pa nyid kyi sgra, kho rang mnyam pa nyid kyi rang bzhin red. rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su gang zag gzhan pha gyis rtogs par byed yag la, mnyam pa nyid lab dgos gi red; mnyam pa nyid lab pa 'di sgra red."*

[20] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 10, 1995) identifies the "non-manifest" (*snang med*) as the formless realm (*gzugs med khams*), the "manifest" (*snang ba*) as the desire realm (*'dod pa'i khams*), and the "semi-manifest" (*phyed snang*) as the form realm (*gzugs khams*) which he attributes to Longchenpa in the *yid bzhin mdzod*.

[21] Read *gsum* ***gyi*** for *gsum* ***gyis***.

[22] Of these various enumerations, Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 10, 1995) says: *"gcig: 'khor ba ma dag pa'i chos thams cad kho rang sems gcig; kho rang sems gcig snang bar ma gtogs yog ma red ba? rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su ga re zer na, rig pa byang chub gyi sems gcig. gnyis: sems kyi snang ba 'di ma dag pa'i 'khor ba; ye shes kyi snang ba 'di mya ngan las 'das pa, dag pa. sems kyi snang ba ma dag pa red, ye shes kyi snang ba 'di, kho rang dag pa red. de ni de las 'gro ba rigs drug dang khams gsum."*

[23] Read *rang* ***gis*** for *rang* ***rig***.

[24] Read *bdag* ***rtog*** for *bdag* ***rtogs***.

[25] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 10, 1995) says the following about the notion of the distortions and awareness abiding together: *"sems can gyi gna skabs su nyon mongs yog red, nyon mongs lnga yog red yin na'ang ye shes lnga med pa nang bzhin red; sangs rgyas kyi gnas skabs su nyon mong lnga yog ma red, ye shes kyi rang bzhin yog red; yin na'ang, rdzogs chen dbang du byed na nyon mongs ye shes lnga de la yod pa dang med pa gnyis rnam phye mi 'dug. de nas, nyon mongs lnga po da ga rang ye shes lnga red."*

[26] Read *rang gi* ***yul*** for *rang gi* ***lus***.

[27] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 11, 1995) says the following about memory: *"dran pa dper na dbang po lnga la dad pa, brtson 'grus, dran pa zer gyi red ba? dran pa 'di ga re red zer na, 'di rnam byang dbang po'i dran pa red. dper na, ting nge 'dzin gyi dgong pa (sgom pa) la, ting nge 'dzin sgom pa'i thabs man ngag dran pa red. 'di red ba? 'di la de nas kho rang dran thams cad bzhag na, 'di gas (brgyad) red: dper na, tshad ma'i gnas skabs su dran pa, dad pa'i yul dran pa. da lta, rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su 'di de nas dran 'di ting nge 'dzin sgom pa'i dran pa yin."* (Greg: *"rdzogs chen gyi skabs su, dran pa yag po 'dug, yag pa mi 'dug?"*) Khenpo: *"rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su,*

yag po dang sdug chag khyad par gang yang mi 'dug. rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su kho rang bsam pa dang dran pa da ga rang ye shes red, 'di red; sprul sku'i bya ba 'di, 'di red." (Greg: *"spyir btang dran pa dang rnam rtog khyad par ga red yog red?"*) mKhan-po: *"dran pa 'di ga re zer na, tshad ma dbang du byed na, dad pa'i yul dran pa. snga ma mthong tshar zhig, de nas sems la dran pa red ba? rnam rtog, de nas gsar pa red—rnam rtog gsar pa gsar pa red. 'di red. de nas de ma yin na, kho rang dran pa ga re zer na, bla med gdams ngag dran pa. kho rang dran pa red, rnam rtog la brten nas ga re yin chog gi red ba?"*

[28] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 11, 1995) says the following about meditation according to the Great Perfection: *"rdzogs pa chen po'i gnas skabs su, rang gi kho rang rnam rtog de nas bsam par skad cig ma'i khyad par, rnam rtog gi khyad par, dran pa'i khyad par, gang yin na'ang skor la 'bad chos (?) lab na rtsol ba red ba? rtsol ba dang 'gag pa dang grub pa gang yang ma bcos kho rang de 'dra'i shar bzhag rgyu da ga rang rdzogs chen gnas skabs su sgom pa red. rtsol med rang gzhag sgom pa red. de nas, yag po zhig dran na, 'di yag po zhig bsam la yang, dga' gi yog red ba? sdug chag dran na, 'di sdug chag red bsam dgos red ba? rdzogs chen gnas skabs su de gang yang mi 'dug. yag po dran na, bde dga' se gzhag; sdug chag dran na, da ga rang gzhag gi red ba?*

[29] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 11, 1995) tried to clarify this metaphor: (Greg: *"grong khyer 'di nga ho ma song. grong khyer 'di ga re red?"*) Khenpo: *"'di rdzogs chen gyi lta ba red. lta ba grong khyer rgyun bcod zer nyan 'di red. grong khyer* is like a city, *red ba?* A person who has stopped all his relations with going to the city, he has no relationship with the city. So here, all external world, internal living beings, appearances and everything, whatever it is, itself is not existing at all—it is just totally emptiness." (Greg: "...because he has finished his relationship with the city?") mKhan-po: "Not just only finishing the relationship. The main reason is he has no reason to go the city. He does not need it at all." (Greg: *"'di skabs su, grong khyer gyi don dag ga ra red?"*) Khenpo: *"grong khyer gyi rgyun gcod, phyi snod kyi 'jig rten, nang bcud kyi sems can, 'khor ba'i chos, snang ba dang thos pa dang drag pa (?) dang gang yin kyang thams cad thag gcad byed na, gang yang rang bzhin ma grub pa red.* Everything is emptiness. *'di dzogs pa chen po'i lta ba red.*

[30] Play *(rol pa)*, dynamism *(rtsal ba)*, and ornament *(rgyan)* are three different (i.e., *not* synonyms) dimensions of the dynamism of awareness *(rip pa)*. Long-chen-pa talks about these in great detail in *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Profound (zab mo yang thig).* Check Lipman's *Primordial Awareness.* Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 11, 1995): *"spyir rdzogs chen la sems sde dbang du byas na, snang srid 'khor 'das kyi 'dus pa'i chos thams cad rang byung ye*

shes kyi rol pa red. de nas, klong sde ltar na, chos thams cad rang byung ye shes kyi rtsal red. man ngag brtag du byas na, (chos thams cad) rang byung ye shes kyi rgyan shar ba red. thams cad ni kho rang ye shes kyi rol pa, ye shes kyi rtsal, ye shes kyi rgyan du shar ba red. 'di'i shar ba 'di ga re red zer na, rang snang ba las snang mkhan snang rgyu (?) subject-object *gnyis ka kho rang*

31 This progressive discussion of the commitments seems to correspond to the standard typology: (1) View (*lta ba*); (2) meditation (*sgoms pa*); (3) conduct (*spyod pa*); and (4) fruit (*'bras bu*).

32 These three, namely analogy (*dpe*), significance (*don*), and indication (*rtags*) refer to a standard tantric hermeneutical strategy. "In dependence on the analogy, you recognize the significance. In dependence on the indication/sign, faith arises" (*dpe la brten nas, don ngo shes/ rtags la brten nas, yid ches 'gyur*).

33 See note 3.

34 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 15, 1995) has the following comments about "true nature" (*rang bzhin bden pa*) and how it compares with the dGe-lugs concept of "true existence" (*bden grub*): *"dge lugs kyi lta ba la bum pa bden grub kyis stong pa red. bum yog red, yin'ang bden grub kyis stong pa red. bden grub kyis stong na, bum da dung yog red. de nas, bum rang bzhin med pa gtan la babs pa'i gnas skabs su, bum pa yog ma red. bum pa kho rang gi ngo bo rang bzhin med red. rang bzhin med pa dang rang bzhin bden pa med pa gcig pa red."*

35 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 15, 1995) states the following about *rig pa byang chub kyi sems: "rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su rig pa byang chub kyi sems thog ma'i gzhi red. 'di gzhi las sangs rgyas dang sems can thams cad byung gi red."*

36 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 15, 1995) identifies the "phenomenal appearances" (*snang ba'i chos can*) as the six sense objets or "all functioning things" (*dngos po thams cad*). He further says: *"da 'di ga re red zer na, dpe dang don; dpe nam mkha' snod bcud shar nas gdod rig pa dang rig pa'i klong du shar ba'i chos gnyis ka rang bzhin med pa bstan pa red. da de nas, 'rig pa'i ngo bor snang ba' rdzogs chen gyi rig pa. rig pa kho rang gi ngang la gang snang ba kyi chos can ngo bo thams cad rang bzhin med par sbtan pa red."*

37 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 15, 1995) mentions this idea is also discussed in the first chapter of the *Precious Treasury of Reality's Expanse*: *"da lta chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod, chos dbyings mdzod nang la le'ur dang por chos thams cad byang chub kyi sems kho rang g.yos par bstan pa'i le'ur zer gyi red. thams cad byang chub sems kyi rang bzhin, byang chub sems kho rang las gzhan du rdul tu grub pa de nas dag (?), de nas bems po dag, ma dag pa'i chos zag med yog ma red*

zer rgyu red. 'di'i do dag gcig pa red ba?" (The actual title of the first chapter of the *chos dbyings mdzod* is "*'khor 'das dbyings las ma g.yos pa'i rang bzhin bstan pa*")

38 read *ngang las* for *ngang la* according to the preceding verse and the following quotation.

39 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 15, 1995) explains this verse thus: "*gang snang ba 'di gas thams cad byang chub sems kyi rang bzhin red zer gyi red. byang chub sems kyi rang bzhin yin pa, byang chub sems kyi rang bzhin las ma g.yos na, rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su rdzogs chen gyi spyod pa la blang dor med zer gyi red; rdzogs chen lta ba la bzang ngan med zer gyi yog red. de med pa gang yin zer na, thams cad byang chub sems las g.yos ba mi 'dug zer gyi red.*"

40 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 15, 1995) differentiates this absence of apprehended object and apprehending subject from similar notions articulated in the Mind-Only (*cittamātra, sems tsam pa*) school: "*gzung ba yul, 'dzin pa sems red ba? yul dang yul can red. kho rang gnyis ka las grol nas, rig pa'i ngang 'gro zer gyi red. sem tsam pas gnyis stong gi shes (? bshad?) pa rang rig rang tshad (?). sems tsam pa'i lugs la rang rig yod pa red ba? rang rig yod na, (kun tu?) rang rig dbang du byas na (?), gzung 'dzin gyis stong pa zer rgyu red. yin na'ang, da dus 'dra gi mi 'dug. khong tsho gyi gzung 'dzin gnyis stong 'di gnyis kyis stong pa'i shes pa (?bshad?) rang rig rang tshad don dam pa la yod. 'di tshos yod par khas len du. De nas rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su, rig pa kho rang yang rang bzhin med pa red. rig pa yang don dam pa la yod pa zer yag 'di bzhag gi mi 'dug.*"

41 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 15, 1995) explains this line thus: "*gzung ba'i yul yang chos kyi dbyings red zer gyi 'dug. 'dzin pa'i yul can shes pa yang chos dbyings red zer. chos kyi dbyings la yog red zer yag 'di, spyir btang gzung 'dzin kho rang red ba? gzung 'dzin rang chos yog red zer gyi yog ma red zer. dper na, da lta nga tshor gzung 'dzin tha dad snang ba red. chos kyi dbyings la, yul de yang gzung ba chos kyi dbyings. 'dzin pa de yang chos kyi dbyings. tha dad yog ma red zer.*

42 The five sense objects, i.e., form, sound, scent, flavor, and tangible objects (*gzugs, sgra, dri, ro, reg bya*).

43 The eight analogies of illusion: (1) Dream (*rmi lam, svapna*); (2) illusion (*sgyu ma, māyā*); (3) optical illusion (*mig yor, pratibhāsa*); (4) mirage (*smig rgyu, marici*); (5) reflection of the moon in water (*chu zla, udakacandra*); (6) echo (*brag cha, pratiśrutkā*); (7) castle in the sky (*dri za'i grong khyer, gandharvanagara*); and (8) emanation or phantom (*sprul pa, nirmita*). See Dorje and Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Vol. 2*, (Boston: Wisdom, 1991), p. 161.. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 16, 1995) says that these analogies are used in sequence. If, after the first analogy is used in explanation of the absence of inherent existence, the person

still does not understand the point, the second analogy is used and so forth.

[44] This reading mirrors Lipman's, although it offers no compelling reason to accept the assertion that phenomena (*chos*) are not established as the mind.

[45] In 35.1 read *rdul phran cha **med*** for *rdul phran cha **mad**.*

[46] I here interpret awareness (*rig pa*) to be the basic or "trunk" phenomenon, and all appearances arising out of that awareness as the subsidiary or "branch" phenomena (*yan lag chos)* in accordance with the previous discussion. My idea is that one gets at the *rig pa* by way of its manifestations.. This interpretation, however, is open to question. Dargyay interprets *yan lag chos* as religion and its branches, but this interpretation has problems of its own. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 16, 1995) seems to be in agreement with the former interpretation. He states: *"yan lag shes bya chos kyi yan lag. spyir btang shes bya'i yan lag, spyir btang yan lag* branch *nang bzhin zer gyi red ba? da shes bya'i yan lag, kho rang dngos po dang dngos med, rtag pa dang mi rtag pa don dam cha'i shes bya'i yan lag. shes bya'i bye brag gcig pa 'dra po red. chos kyi dbang gis chos thams cad*

[47] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 16, 1995) paraphrases this line: *"chos thams cad kyi snying po rang gi rang bzhin 'byung bas chos sku las ma rtogs, chos sku las gzhan na gang yang yog ma red*

[48] In 35.3 read *gcig la **rtsis*** for *gcig la **rtses**.*

[49] In 35.5 read ***rigs** pa* for ***rig** pa.*

[50] In 35.6. read ***rigs** pas* for ***rig** pas.*

[51] The passage here cited is extremely problematic: (1) The full citation from the Tantra suggests that the term *sna tshogs sems* is a technical term, and hence would not lend itself to our translation, "the diverse phenomena (*sna tshogs sems*) [are said to be] the mind (*sems);* (2) There are two lines that have been omitted by Longchenpa which severely alter the sense of the passage; (3) If Longchenpa wants us to interpret this passage in accordance with him, then the term *sna tshogs sems* should be interpreted as *sna tshogs byang chub gyi sems,* and everything should be said to emerge from *byang chub gyi sems.* However, if that is said, then why deny that the fruit of Buddhahood (*sangs rgyas 'bras bu*) comes from the *sems*? He does not appear to directly answer this question, but rather shifts the terms of the discussion to the sentient being's (*sems can*=one who possesses [ordinary] mind). There seems to be some problem with what the Tantra itself means and what Longchenpa wants it to mean.

The general purport of the passage as it is cited here (it is cited differently and in a different context in the *Treasury of Words and Meanings)* appears to be the following: Someone

is trying to maintain that the diverse appearances are the mind, and the questioner rejects this by saying that if that is true then Buddhahood is simply the distorted mind's illusion, and that makes no sense. There is no way the defiled mind can become a Buddha, or that a Buddha could be a product of such a mind. The analogy given is that ordinary mind is like a piece of black coal that can never be white, no matter how much one washes it.

[52] Reminiscient of the Ch'an/Zen story where Huai-jang asks Ma-tsu: "Why are you constantly doing zazen?" to which Ma-tsu answered: "To attain Buddhahood." At that, Huai-jang picked up a brick and started rubbing it vigorously. Ma-tsu asked:" What are you doing?" to which Huai-jang replied: "I'm making a mirror from this brick." Ma-tsu said, "That's absurd. You can't make a mirror from a brick." Huai-jang said, "Indeed. And how is it possible to become a buddha by doing zazen?" See Sheng-Yen, "Zen Meditation," in *Zen: Tradition and Transition*, Kenneth Kraft, ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1988), p. 36.

[53] In 36.2. read ***rang gi sems*** for ***ngang gi sems.***

[54] **Germano:** Thus, calling those *snang srid* "enlightening mind" is merely a case of the name of dereivative effects (i.e, *snang srid*) being labeled in terms of their causal impetus (i.e., *byang chub kyi sems*). In other words, the sun is the cause of the sun's rays, yet when we talk about sun rays we just refer to them as the sun—this is a case of using the name of the cause to refer to the fruit, the derivative effects. This is a different way of reading the Tibetan term *'bras bu* than reading it as the culmination or "Buddhahood."

Or: The name of the fruit of Buddhahood, i.e., the so-called "enlightening mind," is here being used to label the *cause* of saṃsāra. In other words the rGyu and the 'Bras are both Byang Chub Sems.

[55] Other than that, those manifestations of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa should be recognized as simply the dynamism of Rig Pa, and it is not the case that Rig Pa itself can be hashed out as saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, and you should recognize that instead it is the unimpeded source.

Paraphrase: Basically we are saying that you do talk about the *snang srid* as the Bodhicitta not because the *snang srid are* Bodhicitta, but because the Bodhicitta is the cause of the *snang srid*, just as we call the sun rays the "sun" because the sun is its cause. However, apart from that, do not think that the *snang srid* are actually *rig pa*—they are not—they are the *dynamism* of Bodhicitta.. Therefore awareness itself is the potential/source ('Char gZhi); it is not to be labelled as saṃsāra or nirvāṇa. This is the crux of Longchenpa's critique of *sems tsam* and his differentiation between *rdzogs chen* and *sems tsam*.

---

[56] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso mentions that even among followers of rDzogs-chen, Mahāmudrā, and Shegyan (?), there are certain who assert that everything is mind, while there are others who assert that everything is separate from mind.

[57] Read *med de* for *med do*.

[58] Lipman has "they assert that the presence of the energies of creativity and excitement that enhance the flash of knowing, are at bottom the same." *Primordial Experience*, p. 26. Germano sees no cogent reading of this sentence. It *may* be that *ngo bo* here is an abbreviation for *rig pa'i ngo bo*, the essence of awareness. Hence Longchenpa may be saying that even members of his own Nyingma school are not making the distinctions between awareness (*rig pa*) and its dynamism (*rtsal*), which was a problem up above. This is the distinction between the potential and the manifestation.

[59] Here again, the sun is awareness (*rig pa*) and its rays are its dynamism that is its appearances and interpretations (*snang srid*). Just as one ray of sun-light can open and close lotuses and water lilies respectively, so awareness' dynamism can do the daylight thing (nirvāṇa) or the night-time thing (saṃsāra). Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso gives basically the same interpretation: *"nyi ma kho rang gi zer gcig 'dis bya ba gnyis lhun gyis byung ltar red ba? de ga nang bzhin, rig pa kho rang gi nus pa 'khor ba'i chos ma dag pa dang mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos dag pa shar ba red."*

[60] gDangs=exterior radiation, *mdangs*=interior glow or potential.

[61] Alternative: Awareness emanates its radiance, butter lamp emanates its light, and the sun emanates its rays. Awareness (*rig pa*) is the pure potential, dynamism (*rtsal*) is the capacity of that potential and the space takes shape, it creates a field, and the playfulness (*rol pa*) is the activity within that field, i.e., the pure and impure saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. *tsal* initiates the *'khor 'das*. rGyan is the elaboration of maṇḍalas, etc.

[62] "This unimpededness is becoming a duality, a fissuring, but that fissuring division in the polarities remains tuned into the absence; This is what I call play, baby." In Bön, they do not talk about the essence (*ngo bo)*, nature (*rang bzhin*), and the "resonating concern" (*thugs rje*), but about mother (*ma*), child (*bu*), and the dynamism (*rtsal*). What happens when a mother gives birth to a child? The vagina is blocked and the blood does not flow; instead the blood is retained, it is blocked up, and the pregnancy takes place. Then the child (*bu*) is born. The ground is the mother (*gzhi ma*=ground mother). There is an obvious correlation between the *rtsal, rol pa, rgyan*, and ngo bo, *rang bzhin, thugs rje*. In Bön terminology, the mother (*ma*) is

the ground, the *ma 'gags* is the *rtsal*. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso doesn't necessarily agree with this interpretation (although whether he is aware of the Bön doctrine is unclear). He states: *"rtsal kho rang gi rang bzhin 'gags pa med pa red ba? ma 'gags pa'i sgo nas rig pa'i rtsal dang rig pa gnyis don la rnam pa thams cad tha dad su shar rgyu mi 'dug zer. rig pa kho rang gi rtsal phyi logs shar ba red zer gyi red. rig pa kho rang gi rtsal phyi logs shar ba 'di ngo sprod (thug?) na, de nas sangs rgyas kyi 'dug. rig pa kho rang gi rtsal phyi logs su shar ba ngo ma sprod na, 'khrul gyi 'dug, de nas 'khrul 'khor ba sems can la sogs pa skyes kyi red."*

63 We have been talking about absence, so let's tear away the mask and see what absence really looks like, its own face. The *"rang"* is ambiguous—this face of absence which is our own. We tear away the mask and we look into absence, into the abyss, and our subjectivity looks back at us. This gets back to the theme under consideration here, *gnad bkrol*, in that we are uncovering the key points, or "indicting" doing away with dissimulation and subterfuge, getting down to the real you. No more criminality: we have laid bare who you really are.

64 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso comments on the "three existences" (*srid pa gsum*): (Greg: *"srid pa gsum dang khams gsum gcig pa red pas?"*) mKhan-po: *"spyir btang gcig pa red. steng lha'i srid pa; bar mi'i srid pa; 'og klu'i srid pa—de 'dra'i nang bzhin. de nas, yang nang nas, 'dod khams, gzugs khams, gzugs med khams, khams gsum red ba? zhe drag khyad pa mi 'dug."*

65 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso has the following to say about the terms *rig pa zang ka* and *rig pa zang thal*: *"rig pa zang ka rig pa zang ka ma zer gyi red. rig pa zang ka ma, de nas rig pa rang gi ngo bo rang bzhin ma grub pa yang de nas rang gi ngo bo 'gag pa med pa red. rig pa kho rang rang bzhin med na yang, de nas kho rang gi rol pa zer na, kho rang gi rtsal lab 'di de nas kho rang 'gag pa'i tshig du sgo nas, gang cir yang 'char ba red. rig pa zang ka ma 'di red."* (Greg: *"zang ka ma dang 'gag pa med pa gnyis la khyad par yog red pas?"*) mKhan-po: *"tog tsam khyad par yog red.* Like gold without any mixture. Just like that this *rig pa* without any mixture of the sa?sāric or nirvā°ic phenomena. It's unadulterated. *zang ka ma 'di rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su mang po lab kyi 'dug."* (Greg: *"rig pa zang ka ma dang rig pa zang thal khyad par ga re yog red?"*) mKhan-po: *"sphyir stangs zang thal zer tsam pa* no obstruction. As for *rig pa zang thal*, in general the nature of the mind itself is non-obstruction. *rdzogs chen gyi rig pa de nas kho rang rdzogs chen dper na, chos sku zang thal zer, 'ja' lus zang thal zer, de nas kho rang 'ja' lus zang thal lus thams cad de nas kho rang 'ja' nang bzhin*, transparent, and unobstructed

66 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso explains the term *rjen pa*: *"dper na rjen pa red ba? lus rjen pa, de nas*

dper na, tshal rjen pa. 'di rjen pa red ba? ma btsos ba red. ari kyi grang tshal nang bzhin red. rjen pa zer ba 'di kho rang la chos (bcos?) las gang yang med pa, kho rang ma bcos pa red. ma bcos pa'i rang bzhin gang yin rjen pa red. Unfabricated *red ba?"*

67 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso interprets the "abyss of pleasure and pain" (*bde sdug gi g.yang sa*) as hope and fear (*re ba dang dogs pa*), or as he translates them, optimism and pessimism about falling into saṃsāra or attaining nirvāṇa.

68 After all, you are still in your bed!

69 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso explains the title of this work by dGa'-rab rDo-rje in the following way: *"spyi zer na, spyi bo, blugs zer na,* 'pouring.' *rig pa spyi blugs kyi dbang zer nyan rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su 'di da lta gcig pa red ba? de ga nang bzhin, brgyud pa gsum gyi nang nas rig 'dzin brda'i brgyud rdzogs pa chen po'i rig pa spyi blugs kyi dbang. brda' gyi skyor ba (?) tshang ma yongs rtogs mtshar gyi 'dug."*

70 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso explains how the body and mind can be equal: *"mnyam pa nyid kyi yul du lus dang sems gnyis ka yang rang bzhin ma grub pa red. lus dang sems tha dad pa'i bag chags mi 'dug."*

71 We want to speak of a "still point" at the center of activity, but here dGa' Rab rDo rJe seems to be saying quite the opposite: stillness itself (i.e., the equality *mnyam pa*) is a current of energy, a seething dynamic state of stillness. Emptiness is not a static absence—and here we are talking about absence. The very notion of "winds of equality" creates a certain dissonance. Here we have activity, but stress-free activity (*g.yos pa*=stress). Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso: (Greg: *"mnyam pa'i rlung 'di ga re red?"*) Khenpo: *"mnyam pa'i rlung 'di red. mnyam pa nyid kyi rlung. tsa ba'i rlung la dbye na gnyis yo red, las kyi rlung dang ye shes kyi rlung. de nas rdzogs chen dman cad kyis thams cad rlung gi sgos nas bzhag gi 'dug. rlung gi sgo nas bzhag dus mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos ye shes kyi rlung gis 'char ba red. 'khor ba'i chos thams cad las kyi rlung gis 'char ba red. 'di rlung 'di 'gags (?) bzo na, thams cad mnyam pa nyid kyi rang bzhin red. mnyam pa nyid kyi rlung zer ba 'di rlung bye brag yog ma red. bye brag dper na, ye shes rlung dang las kyi rlung zer na 'di las logs su chod pa'i mnyam pa nyid kyi rlung zer na spyir btang yog ma red. spyir btang sman rgyud las (?) khyab byed kyi rlung, 'khor ba'i g.yos ba khyab byed kyi rlung la sogs pa, rlung lnga bzhag bshad kyi red ba? las rlung gi dbye ba la lnga yog red. spyir btang rlung mahā dang anu, anu gnas skabs su rlung gi sgo nas gtan la babs shar ba. de nas mnyam pa nyid kyi rlung zer ba 'di rig pa byang chub sems kyi don dam gcig pa bshad kyi red. mnyam pa'i rlung 'di ga re red zer na, 'khor ba dang mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos gnyis su med pa*

---

red. 'di rlung las g.yos ba mi 'dug zer gyi red.

[72] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso comments: *"spyi blugs zer ba 'di dper na 'di red: spyi bo lab 'dug ang? dper na spyi bo ma blugs bzo na, lus thams cad khyab kyi 'dug. de nas thams cad la khod snyoms po 'dug. de ga nang bzhin, mtshan ma'i yul la yul med—yul med na mtshan ma 'dzin pa med*

[73] "Ultimate"=*don dam*. Creative etymology of this word, like the English word re-ligion, is that which binds (*don dam, ligio*) back (*re*) to meaningfulness (*don*).

[74] In the previous stanzas we have seen that opposites are equal within the expanse; here, dGa' Rab rDo rJe also says the primary and secondary directions, which are not strictly opposed to each other, are also equal within the expanse.

[75] We are interpreting the "body of the abyss" as the sa?sāric body insofar as this body of the five contaminated aggregates is in a sense the abyss of saṃsāra since it is the locus of sensuality, the main of the so-called "pitfalls." This body is our downfall. We have eliminated our ordinary body since we have eliminated cause and effect and saṃsāra. In rDzogs Chen the body is corporeality that is the congealment of the light energy by virtue of our non-recognition, therefore, without saṃsāra, the body no longer takes place, the locus of sensuality into which we descend, therefore, where would a pitfall be? OR The body is absence—where would the pitfalls be?

[76] Thig Le Nyag gCig is synonymous with the ground. It is an organizing center.

[77] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso glosses *theg pa 'og ma* with *rgyu 'bras kyis theg pa.*

[78] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso says that although there is no view in rDzogs-chen from the point of view of the ultimate (*gnas lugs dbang du byas na*), in general there is a view associated with the Great Perfection.. The contexts/occasion that depend on the view of rDzogs-chen are the ground (*gzhi*), path (*lam*), and fruit/result (*'bras bu*) of the Great Perfection. In the context of these three, there is a view, meditation and practice/conduct; in the context of the view, however, there is no view, no meditation, and no conduct. *"lta ba chos can. sgom du med te. rang gnas kyi ye shes kyi ngang la gnas pa'i phyir."*

[79] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso emphasizes the absence of conscious intention here. *"sems can gyi las dang sangs rgyas kyi 'phrin las 'di 'bad rtsol med pa rang bzhin lhun grub kho rang sems nyid 'byung khungs red. dper na, nyi ma'i 'od zer shar dus nyi ma'i rang bzhin gsal ba nang bzhin. nyi ma'i 'od zer gyis nga gyis de nas me tog pad ma kha 'byed de nas ku mu ta kha zum, de 'dra'i bsam blo gang yang mi 'dug."*

[80] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso comments on this with the following example: *"dper na, kun rdzob*

kyi gnas skabs su 'bras bu dang lam dang sgom pa dang nyams len byed mkhan rnal 'byor pa dang de 'dras mang po bshad rgyu 'dug. yin na'ang, don dam pa la de bshad rgyu mi 'dug. yang don dam pa la, don dam bden pa chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs zer ba 'di

81 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso mentions that connected phenomena includes those such as cause and effect; if there is a cause and effect, then there is said to be a connection or relationship (*'brel ba*). In general there are two relations: in the context of discussions on reasoning (*rtags rigs*) and valid cognition (*tshad ma*), it is said that there are the two, *ngo bo bdag nyid gcig gi 'brel ba dang de las byung ba'i 'brel ba zer gyi red.* Usually it is said that effects arise from their causes, and in that sense there is a connection. But in the context of the Great Perfection, it is said that the Abiding Reality (*gnas lugs*) transcends the cause and effect relationship.

82 The term *mtshan bcas* here appears to be related to the discussion of yoga with signs (*mtshan bcas kyi rnal 'byor*) and the yoga without signs (*mtshan med pa'i rnal 'byor*), i.e., discursive and abstract meditations, found in the class of Action Tantra (*Kriyatantra, bya ba'i rgyud*). See Jeffrey Hopkins, et al. *Tantra in Tibet* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1989?). Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso mentions that in rDzogs-chen, there is not even the visualization of the finger of a deity, never mind the whole body, maṇḍala, etc.

83 Question: Are the ten natures positive or negative? In other words, are they the natures (i.e., characteristics *mtshan nyid*) such as *'phrin las la sogs pa* found only in the eight lower vehicles that are "absent" or "missing" in the Great Perfection? Or are the natures the absences themselves that are then the ten natures of the Great Perfection?

84 Reading *ma rtogs na* for *ma rtogs sha.*

85 The preceding five verses are Longchenpa's explanation of the absence of the first nature (i.e., *lta sgom*) in the Great Perfection. The following verses will explain the remaining natures. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso says that this can be interpreted either as an exhortation to not seeḳ the All-Creating King with energy or exertion (*'bad rtsol*), or not to look for it by means of the tenet systems of Anuyoga and below.

86 Here Longchenpa seems to be alluding to the practice of the generation stage (*bskyed rim*) in tantra in which appearances are generated as clear and so forth. This ties into the whole Great Perfection rhetoric against visualization.

87 "*kLong*" is difficult to read here. Two possible interpretations are, (1) *klong* means "center" in the sense that *rig pa* lacks defies any attempt to create boundaries or foundations for it, and (2) *klong* means "origin" in the sense that it is impossible to create narratives about the

"beginning" of awareness. One of these may be correct.

88 The implication here is that normative Buddhist discourse is nonsense.

89 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso glosses *yin thog* ("direct mode of being") with *gnas lugs yin pa thog tu sleb pa red.*

90 In 42.3, Read *gzhi ma bskyod pas* for *gzhi ma bskyod pa.*

91 In a Buddhist context, it is quite shocking to say that all your activities have no ethical force to them. This flies in the face of normative Buddhist interpretations of karma. etc. This is the joke.

92 The joke here is that the singularity overcomes the duality.

93 This entire passage appears to resist the laws and institutions of normative Buddhism (and its attendant social agendas) with its emphasis on jokes, games, aesthetics—these resist legal codes. There is a certain subversive social agenda to this passage as well

94 Appears to be a polemical attack on proto-Geluk view of emptiness. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso explains the notion of an emptiness which is a non-emptiness in the following way: *"mi stong pa'i stong pa stong pa rang gi ngo bo nyid mi stong pa red. stong pa'i ngo bo nyid mi stong pa red. stong pa ngo bo nyid mi stong pa'i stong pa de yin na dper na mi stong pa'i stong pa dngos can zer, dngos po can, dngos po can la brten nas kho rang ltos dang zer gyi 'dug. mi stong pa 'di dngos po can red. mi stong pa dngos po can 'di med pa 'di'i stong pa. bdag med pa 'di spyir btang bdag med pa stong pa can zer gyi red. bdag tu 'dzin pa yang dngos po'i gnas lugs dbang du byas na mi 'dug; bdag tu 'dzin pa mi 'dug. 'di bdag tu 'dzin pa'i theg pa 'di ga re zer na, mi stong pa'i stong pa red."*

95 Alternative readings: One attains the unborn state through the produced—i.e., it is only by dealing with the manifold displays of awareness that one attains to the absolute. This is consonanmt with the rDzogs Chen valorization of phenomena and ordinary activities.. Other reading: One atains the unborn state through being born. This is an elaboration or refinement of the above interpretation. Only through the ugly messy sticky process of birth can one hope to go beyond it.

96 In 43.5, read *rigs pas* for *rig pas.* DG: Longchenpa often confuses these. Whether it is him, later redactors, or an archaic spelling is not clear. Longchenpa is generally pretty consistent, but there is a consistent pattern of sub-inconsistency too. Apparently there is an incident in his biography where a ḍākiṇi appears before him and asks why he pronounces the word without a "sa."

---

[97] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso says that in the context of Mādhyamika, when you perform analysis, this phenomenon is not established. If you do not analyze, however, the phenomenon appears, at which time it is asserted to be an existent thing. In the context of the Great Perfection, if you perform analysis, it is as if it did not exist, and even at the time of not analyzing, it is absent.

[98] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso mentions three types of "childish beings" (*byis pa*): "*byis pa da so so'i skye bo red ba? byis pa la gsum bzhag gi 'dug ang? 'phags pa la ltos (?) pa'i byis pa; rgan po la ltos pa'i byis pa; mkhas pa la ltos pa'i byis gsum yog red. 'phags pa la ltos pa so so'i skye bo tshang ma byis pa, tshang ma pu gu red.*"

[99] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso identifies "anyone at all" (*su la'ang*) in the following way: "*su la'ang zer na, gang zag. byis pa'i rnam grangs, 'phags pa'i rnam grangs, rdzogs chen gyi rnal 'byor pa'i rnam grangs. nga tshos 'di la dge sdig rgyu 'bras 'di so so'i skye bo la bten pa yod, 'phags pa la bden pa med bsam gyi yog red ba? 'phags pa la bden pa med, so so'i ske bo la dge sdig rgyu 'bras bden pa yod bsam na, gang zag khag khag bzhag gi 'dug ang?*

[100] In 44.5 read *chos nyis **la** spros pa med* for *chos nyid **las** spros pa med.*

[101] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso: "*da lta nas snang ba thams cad sku gsum gyi rang bzhin dbyer med red zer. dper na rdzogs chen gyi rig pa chos thams cad ngo bo stong pa—chos sku; rang bzhin gsal ba—longs sku; thugs rje kun khyab sna tshogs snang ba—sprul sku.*"

[102] Here the text seems to get explicitly soteriological—i.e., more method oriented.

[103] In Sikkim 45.6, read *'ching* for *'chang* according to the root verses.

[104] In Sikkim 45.5, read *bdag nyid **zhen** pas* for *bdag nyid **zhin** pas* according to the root verses. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso cites the couplet attributed to Tilopa: "*ti lo pa gyis: 'bu snang bas mi 'ching zhen pas 'ching/ zhen pas chod cig na ro pa/*"

[105] In Sikkim 45.7, read ***rtag** tu med pas* for ***brtag** tu med pas.*

[106] DG: This line is unclear: Is the "*dag*" merely "the" and the "*na*" "in," or does the "*dag*" mean "purify" and the "*na* mean "when"? In the latter case, when their world is purified, the experience/cultivate the doctrine/dimension of absence. In the former case it means that they should cultivate the dimension which is absent in this conditioned world, remembering that a world is always constituted and personal.

[107] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 23, 1995) expands on which yogis or "Visionaries (*rnal 'byor pa*) are being referred to here: "*chos thams cad bden pa med pa'i rang bzhin mngon sum tu rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor pa 'phags pa red ba? 'phags pa nang la chos gang yang ma grol ba med pa. thams cad*

grol ba red zer."

108 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 23, 1995): *"ye nas sangs rgyas pas rig pa la yul mi 'dug. chos sku thig le nyag gcig zer ba 'di kho rang rig pa red. rig pa kho rang gi rang bzhin rig pa las tha dad du gyur pa'i yul mi 'dug. de la ga re zer na, yul med de zer."*

109 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 23, 1995) explains the term "progression of cyclic existence" (*srid pa'i babs*) in the following way: *"srid pa'i babs 'di red. don dag dbang du byas na, srid pa'i babs ming tsam bsam blo btang na ga re red zer na, snang bar 'char ba mi srid pa srid pa'i babs red zer gyi 'dug. srid pa'i babs dbang du byas na, de nas da lta phyi logs du snang ba, de nas snang ba, dngos po, 'khor ba, 'khor ba'i chos kyi dngos po dang yod pa dang med pa thams cad de nas snang chog gi 'dug zer. snang ba da ga rang 'khrul pa red zer."* (Greg: *"srid pa'i babs zer ba 'di, ga 'dras sgyur gyi red?"*) mKhan-po: *"srid pa'i lugs brtags du byas na, stong pa las ma dag pa'i snang ba, yul drug dang 'dzin pa drug kho rang sna tshogs snang gi 'dug zer. 'di snang ba da ga rang ngo bo nyid kyis 'khrul pa red. bden pa med pa red. ngo bo nyid kyis 'khrul pa bden med yin dus (pas) snang bar grol lo zer gyi 'dug."*

110 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 23, 1995) explains the "demon of equality" (*mnyam pa'i bdud*) as the demon who *disturbs* the equality or balance through holding such polarized views. *"rdzogs chen dbang du byas na, shar lho nub byang mnyam pa nyid med na yang, srid pa'i babs la shar lho nub byang so sor lta ba 'di ni mnyam pa'i bdud red. don la de nas kho rang mnyam pa nyid red ba? shar lho nub byang mdun rgyab la sogs pa mi 'dug. yin na'ang 'di tsho rdzun rgyas (?) dus, mnyam pa'i bdud red."*

111 Sikkim 46.7 appears to omit the third line of this verse.

112 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 23, 1995) analyzes these lines in an unusual and surprising way: *"rig pa byang chub kyi sems chos can, dbye bsal med de, lhun grub yin pa'i phyir. snga ma snga ma'i phyi ma phyi ma'i rtags (rgyu mtshan) red ba? de ga nang bzhin rig pa byang chub kyi sems chos can, khyod lhun grub yin te, 'du 'bral med pa'i phyir. rig pa byang chub kyi sems chos can, khyod 'du 'bral med de, thig le'i klong yin pa'i phyir ro zer. snga ma snga ma'i rgu mtshan, phyi ma phyi ma'i rtags."*

113 In Sikkim 47.1, read *mthong* for *mtho.*

114 This absence, which may appear to be opposed to meaningfulness or existence, may be, contrary to all our expectations, is somehow the organizing center of *don*—i.e., what matters to us.

One reading: "This absence (*med pa*) which is the organizing center, the core, the nucleus

(*snying po*) of reality, of what really matters." Here *don* would refer to the *chos nyid*. Or you could take it as indicating that absence is the matrix of all the meaning points in our lives. The point is absence (*med pa*) has a central role in our experience, in a way we might not have guessed otherwise before Longchenpa started spinning off all these *med pa* discourses. The idea that all meaning somehow comes down to *absence* is a real slap in the face. This ties into the rhetoric of civilization, where it is said that what *really* matters is to become civilized Tibetans, good boys and girls who all know their Indian subjects, obey the rules, and live in the urban structures. Here what is being said that the real core is the flux, the process of absence that is nothing in itself.

115 Center and horizon of the visual fields. The absence of a horizon and center has an awareness

116 Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 23, 1995) prefers to read this line as "No one at all can see the reason that mind is invisble."

117 Generally there are four "lettings being" (*cog bzhag*): (1) *rgya mtsho cog bzhag;* (2) *ri bo cog bzhag;* (3) *snang ba cog bzhag;* and (4) *rig pa cog bzhag.*

118 In 48.2 read ***med pas bslus*** for ***med pas blus*** according to root text [5.4].

119 The word *don* here, often translated as "meaning" also has the meaning of "referent" or "metaphysical certainty."

120 Root text [5.4] reads *chos **kyi** bdag.*

121 Is it traditional to play off the *chos kyi bdag* and *gang zag gi bdag*i with the *chos* meaning "doctrine"? Longchenpa seems to be saying that the attachment to the self of *chos* is *not* the attachment to the reified status of phenomena, as it is usually interpreted, but to the discourses of one's own vehicle. This appears to be an innovative interpretation on the part of Longchenpa.

122 *khyung chen mkha' lding* (381.6-382.1) in the *bima snying thig* Vol. 2 (found in Longchenpa's *snying thig ya bzhi*, New Delhi, 1970) reads *gzhi med lam **zhes*** for *gzhi med lam **zhen**.* This reading would be: "Whoever4 desires the fruit of the *so-called* 'groundless path' ..." This may refer to a routinization of non-orthodoxy. In your addiction to the path you have banalized the groundlessness which was originally a radically de-centering path.

123 It is possible that this passage is a subtle polemic against Nāgārjuna and other Prasāṅgikas who seek the limits (*mu*) of emptiness.

124 In *gNas lugs mdzod* 48.7 read *shes bya **spros** med* for *shes bya **sgros** med* according to *khyung*

chen 382.3.

[125] At this point in the *Tantra of the Heap of Jewels* the Bodhisattva asks Samantabhadra (who taught this tantra) who was the retinue where was it taught, etc. Right here the Buddha just said the place is not some locale that can be named, but instead, and here is where we start, this great teaching was taught within the sphere of absence (the big vagina in the sky).

[126] In 49.3 read *gang gis gnas su byas pa med* for *gang gi byas gnas su byas pa med* according to 85.3.

[127] In 49.3 read *'dug cing 'ong ba* ***nyid*** *dang 'bral* for *'dug cing 'ong ba* ***med*** *dang 'bral* according to 85.4.

[128] This suggests the possibility that the *ma nor* ("unmistaken") here may gloss *chos sku* ("Reality Gestalt"), which renders the reading something like: "The non-erroneous dimension (*ma nor*), despite all your conventional thoughts and aspirations [concerning it], is not achieved." Another alternative: "The non-erroneous involves nothing to actualized despite all your intentions." Each of these interpretations points to how embodied the whole process of saṃsāra is thought to be. The main theme to be understood from this passage is its anti-intellectualism.

[129] See E.K. Neumaier-Dargyay, trans., *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind: The Motherly Buddha* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992) pp. 94-95.

[130] In *gnas lugs mdzod* 50.3 read *bzhin du ma yin* ***gyis*** for *bzhin du ma yin* ***gyi*** according to *kun byed* 60.3.

[131] *gnas lugs* 50.4 omits *rang sems de bzhin nyid la ma rtog byed* ("Do not conceptualize the suchness of your own mind") which is found in *kun byed* 60.4.

[132] This is a phenomenological kind of thing—do not think that what is going on here is a logical type debate where the mind discerns defining characteristics, but instead it is this lighting up, an experiential thing. This relates to the earlier quote above that suggests that correct understanding will not accomplish anything so long as one's body and speech are tied up in knots.

[133] Or: "Nothing is accomplished through attaining Buddhahood"

[134] In the root text 6.1 read *bya rtsol 'das* ***par*** for *bya rtsol 'das* ***pas*** according to 50.7

[135] *gnas lugs mdzod* 51.2 reads *sangs rgyas ma* ***blta***; *kun byed rgyal po* Thimpu edition 61.1 reads *sans rgyas ma* ***lta***. I think the idea here is one who "looks" at the Buddha with a dualistic conception will not be able to "see" the Buddha, i.e., realize the dimension in which

activities are absent.

[136] *gnas lugs mdzod* 51.2 reads *brtags na med **de**; kun byed rgyal po* Thimpu edition 61.1 reads *brtags na med **te**.*

[137] *gnas lugs mdzod* 51.2 reads *dngos su mi snang rang **bzhin**; kun byed* Thimpu 61.2 reads *dngos su mi snang rang **sems**.*

[138] In *gnas lugs* 51.3 read *theg **can** la* for *theg **chen** la* according to *kun byed* Thimpu ed., 61.2.

[139] In *gnas lugs* 51.3 read *'di min **snyam** pa'i* for *'di min **mnyam** pa'i* according to *kun byed* 61.2.

[140] In *gnas lugs* 51.3 read *spong 'gegs* for *spong gshegs* according to *kun byed* 61.2.

[141] In *kun byed* 61.3 read *rang **la** bzhag* for *rang **gam** bzhag* according to *gnas lugs* 51.3.

[142] In *kun byed* 61.3 read ***tshi** chad nad du* for ***tshe** chad **pa yi** nad du* according to *gnas lugs* 51.3.The KBG reading is something like: "There is nothing [more important] than that in terms of a life-threatening disease."

[143] In *kun byed* 61.3 read *de **lasche ba** med* for *de las med* according to *gnas lugs* 51.3-4.

[144] *gnas lugs* 51.4 reads ***brtod** phur; kun byed* 61.4 reads ***gtod** phur.*

[145] In *kun byed* 61.4 read ***yeng med** shor ba med* for ***yengs ba'i** shor ba med* according to *gnas lugs* 51.4.

[146] In *gnas lugs* 51.4 read ***slu** mkhan **des*** for ***glu** mkhan **te*** according to *kun byed* 61.4.

[147] In *gnas lugs* 51.4 read ***drang** pa'i lung* for ***grong** pa'i lung* according to *kun byed* 61.4.

[148] In *gnas lugs* 51.4 read *ye nas yin **la*** for *ye nas yin **pas*** according to *kun byed* 61.4.

[149] *gnas lugs* reads 51.4 ***yeng** med; kun byed* 61.4 reads ***yengs** med.*

[150] *gnas lugs* 51.7 reads *skye med don la **rtsol**; kun byed* 61.7 reads *skye med don la **btsal**.*

[151] *gnas lugs* 51.7 reads ***bsgrub** tu med; kun byed* 61.7-62.1 reads ***sgrub** tu med.*

[152] *gnas lugs* 51.7 reads *'**grub** mi 'gyur; kun byed* 62.1 reads ***grub** mi 'gyur.*

[153] *gnas lugs* 51.7 reads ***rtsol** zhing bsgrub; kun byed* 62.1 reads ***btsal** zhing bsgrub.*

[154] The root text 6.1 reads *pyhi nang gzung 'dzin med pa'i **rig pa** la;* 51.7 reads *phyi nang gzung 'dzin med pa'i **rang** rig la.*

[155] In gnas lugs 52.1 read *mkha' ltar dag **pas*** for *mkha' ltar dag **pa*** according to root text 6.2.

[156] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 26, 1995): *"theg pa rim pa dgu zer ba 'di tha snyad tsam du theg pa rim pa dgu bzhag red zer. gnas lugs dbang du byas na, theg pa'i sgo ma rtogs pa 'dren gyi mi 'dug zer."*

[157] In *gnas lugs* 52.1 read *de la don du **rtog*** for *de la don du **rtogs*** according to root text 6.2.

[158] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 26, 1995) offers the following gloss: *"theg pa brgyad dang theg*

---

pa dgu la sogs pa med pa de la so sor rnam bzhag, theg pa so sor, grub mtha' rnam bzhag 'byed pa de la don du rtogs pa, de nas 'khrul ba red zer gyi red."

[159] In the root text 6.3 read ***rgya rlabs kyis gcod pas te*** for *rgya rlabs kyis* ***bcad pa ste*** according to *gnas lugs* 52.2.

[160] Or: "They are completely indicted within the doctrine of absence."

[161] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 26, 1995) suggests that this line be read something like: "Emptiness is devoid of all discursive elobations of objects."

[162] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 26, 1995) identifies the "direct immediacy of vision" (*snang ba mngon sum)* as being one of the four appearances (*snang ba*) discussed in rDzogs-chen, specifically the *chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba*. The *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chem mo* (p. 1591) describes these four in the following fashion: *"gsang sngags rdzogs pa chen po'i lam nyams su blangs pa las thob pa'i slob lam nas mi slob lam bar gyi lam gyi snang ba ste: chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba; nyams snang gong 'phel gyi snang ba; rig pa tshad phebs kyi snang ba; chos zad blo 'das kyi snang ba rnams so."* Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso: *"rdzogs chen dbang du byas na, snang ba bzhi zer: chos nyid mngon sum; nyams gong 'phel; rig pa tshad la phebs pa; chos nyid zad zer ba red."* Chime Tsering (May 27, 1995) explains the *snang ba bzhi* as being more or less analogous to the sūtra presenttion of the Path of Seeing (*mthong lam*) and above. The *chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba* corresponds to the first moment of a Path of Seeing where the practitioner has a direct non-conceptual realization of reality (*chos nyid*) or emptiness (*stong pa nyid*). The *nyams gong 'phel gyi snang ba* more or less corresponds to the increasingly deep and prolonged experiences of reality one has as one proceeds along the path. The *rig pa tshad la phebs kyi snang ba* corresponds to the last moment of the path of meditation before one attains complete Buddhahood—one is right at the brink of awareness. Finally, the *chos zad blo 'das kyi snang ba* refers to Buddhahood itself, a condition in which all phenomena are consumed and that transcends ordinary mentality. Is it a little bit ironic that the Great Perfection, a system that prides itself on being beyond such mundane categorizations, should present their own version of the Grounds and Paths (*sa lam*)??

[163] I am reading ***rtog** pa* for ***rtag** pa.*

[164] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 26, 1995) identifies the "the types of encounter" (*thug phrad rnam gsum*) in the following way: *"spyir btang yul dbang shes gsum zer gyi 'dug: yul, dbang po, shes pa. de nas kho rang thug phrad. yul dang dbang po dang shes pa de gsum mtshan ma thug pa yang med na reg pa zer gyi red ba? 'phrad pa dang thug pa don gcig pa red ba? yul la rol pa'i 'gag*

zer ba 'di yul dbang po shes pa gsum ka yang rang gi ngo bo nyid kyis rang bzhin ma grub na, yul lnga gzugs la sogs pa 'gag sa red zer."

[165] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 26, 1995) expands on the important concept of "natural letting be" (*rang gzhag*): *"rig pa byang chub kyi sems, rang gi chos nyid kyi ngang du kho rang du rang gzhag. rig pa byang chub kyi sems, 'di nang la gzhag. 'di gzhag pa gang yin pa da ga rang bde ba chen po red zer. 'di bde ba chen po'i rang bzhin gang yin pa dus gsum du 'gyur ba med pa. 'gyur ba med pa 'di rdo rje pa lam gyi nang bzhin dbyings red zer.."*

[166] Might also translate this line: "When you place yourself in this state of uncontrived equality, you become naturally luminous."

[167] In *gnas lugs* 55.3 read *med pa'i snying po **la*** for *med pa'i snying po **bas*** according to root text 6.7.

[168] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) has a slightly different interpretation of this line: *"snang sems, snang ba, snod bcud kyi dngos po red ba? de nas sems, yul can red. gnad 'gag gsar du snang ba 'khrul pa red ba? 'khrul pa 'di rdzogs chen gyi rig pa chos sku'i dbyings la snang ba dang sems ye nas ma grub pa ye grol chen po red shag. ye nas grol ba med pa snying po bas, snying po 'di ga re zer na, rtag tu chos sku chen po'i dbyings. de'i ngang la snang ba dang sems ye nas chos sku mi 'dug. snang ba dang sems de nas sems dang sems byung red ba? sems sems byung thams cad chos sku'i dbyings la rtsa ba nas grub pa mi 'dug."* (Greg: *"snang ba dang sems ye nas grol ba red pas?"*) mKhan-po: *"chos dbyings nang la, de na ye nas grol ba red. ye grol med pa 'di chos sku chen po'i dbyings la snang ba dang sems dang po nyid nas grub pa mi 'dug. kho rang ye nas grol ba med pa la grol rgyu mi 'dug. grol rgyu'i chos mi 'dug. de'i grol rgyu med na, de nas ye grol med pa 'di kho rang snying po, byang chub kyi sems red."*

[169] The emphasis of these last three verses seems to be that one recognizes and the external appearances and the processes associated with them (i.e., their manifestation, abiding and dissolution) as being related to *"rang"* ("self"") rather than to *"gzhan"* ("another"). This undercuts the whole notion of external reality, but does it stop short of solipcism? Probably.

[170] In *gnas lugs* 55.5 read *klong nas shar **gnas*** for *klong nas shar **nas*** accoring to root text 7.1. Reading the line as it is found in the autocommentary one might translate it as "From the exact moment phenomena arise from the openness of reality, they are naturally free, and thus..." Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) glosses the term "naturally free" (*rang grol*) with *rang gi ngo bo nyid kyis grol ba red.*

[171] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) glosses "natural reflections of emptiness" (*stong pa'i*

rang gzugs) in the following way: *"stong pa'i rang gzugs 'di ga re red zer na, tha dad snang ba thams cad stong pa'i rang gzugs. rdzogs chen gnas skabs su thams cad stong pa'i snang ba zer gyi red."*

[172] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995): *"ngo bo stong pa 'di chos sku red ba? rang bzhin gsal ba 'di longs sku red. stong pa'i rang bzhin chos sku de las gsal bya long spyod pa'i sku snang gi yog red. de nas sangs rgyas kyi rang bzhin sems can thams cad la snod pa'i (?) thugs rje tshad med pa yog red. thugs rje tshad med pa 'di sprul sku red."*

[173] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) glosses "within its own range" (*rang gi ngang la*) in this and the following verses as *rig pa byang chub kyi sems kho rang gi ngang la*. The ambiguity here, and indeed throughout Great Perfection literature, between the *rang* of oneself and the *rang* of the *rig pa byang chub kyi ye shes* appears deliberate and evocative.

[174] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) explains the terse expression "itself in itself" (*nyid la nyid*) in the following way: *"sangs rgyas chos sku chen po rig pa byang chub kyi sems nyid la rig pa byang chub kyi sems nyid kho rang longs spyod pa. longs spyod pa 'di la brtag na, spyir btang longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku red. rig pa byang chub kyi sems kho rang gi ngo bo stong pa red ba? stong pa'i 'di'i gsal las gsal bya longs kyi sku snang bar shar ba red zer. 'di longs sku shar ba da ga rang rig pa byang chub kyi sems kyi rang bzhin. 'di red ba?"*

[175] It is when these two "partners in crime" (i.e., internal mind and external appearance) are caught in the act together that they are apprehended and arrested (*'gag bsdam*). Furthermore, in this encounter between mind and appearance there are usually karmic 'footprints' left, traces (*vasanā, bag chags*) as it were, but here the encounter is confined into a state of tracelessness (*rjes med*).

[176] In *gnas lugs* 56.4 read ***ji ltar shar ba de nyid rang dus der*** for ***ji ltar 'char 'de nyid rang dus der*** according to root text 7.2. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) identifies this as the most important point with respect to Great Perfection practice.

[177] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) describes the expression "the dynamic processes run their course" (*rtsal rdzogs*) in this way: *"rtsal rdzogs, de nas ngo shes pa da ga rang gi nang la de nas rig pa byang chub kyi sems kyi rtsal rdzogs. de las gzhan du ma g.yos pa. bdag tu 'dzin pa gzhan du ma g.yos pa kho rang rtsal rdzogs red. rtsal rdzogs pa da ga rang, rtsal rdzog pa de'i nang la rnam rtog rgyu drug (?) thams cad 'gag nas, de nas rang yal. 'di'i rjes la rjes gang yang mi 'dug."*

[178] Or: "They naturally disappear without a trace."

[179] Or: *bya lam rjes med* "The absence of traces of activities and paths." Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso

---

(May 29,1995) mentions that while this interpretation is interesting, he finds it difficult to make a coherent commentary on this interpretation, but it is probably good to think more about it.

[180] gnas lugs 56.4-5 has chu dang **rba** rlabs 'gag; root text 7.3 has chu dang **dba'** rlabs 'gag.

[181] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) elaborates on the notion of *rtsal rdzogs* discussed in the note above: *"rtsal rdzogs de nas kho rang dran rtog rnam rtog shar ba dang shar ba'i dus de nyid rang la rig pa'i rtsal, rig pa'i rol pa yin pa ngo shes pa red ba? ngo shes pa 'di'i nang las gnas thub pa byung song na, de la brten nas rtsal rdzogs zer. rtsal rdzogs pa 'di red."*

[182] It is not clear what the three relaxations (*glod pa gsum*) are. Perhaps they are divided according to body speech and mind. Alternatively, it may be that the three relaxations are related to the three 'critical junctures' (*'gag gsum*). In this interpretation, one would relax into (1) the nexus of equality, (2) the nexus of the self-emergent primordial wisdom, or (3) the nexus of water and waves. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 29, 1995) suggests that there are not three relaxations at all, but rather three nexuses into which you confine or arrest whatever appears: (1) Releasing whatever appears (*gang shar cog gis gzhag pa*); (2) [memories and emotions] are allowed to transform into vastness (*yangs par 'gyur 'jug pa*); and (3) one relaxes into that very manifestation as soon as it appears (*snang thog shar ba der glod pa*). This is his alternative interpretation.

[183] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 30, 1995): *"rig pa'i rtsal ngo ma shes na, phyal ba rang ka, dper na rig pa rang ka ma, 'di las ldog pa, phyal ba rang ka ma. phyal ba zer ba 'di spyir btang grub mtha' 'dra po gang la yang ma bzhugs pa, de 'dra po phyal ba zer gyi 'dug ang?"* (Greg: *"spyir btang gnas lugs mdzod kyi skabs su phyal ba zer ba 'di dmigs bsal gyi phyal ba red ba? yin na'ang phyal ba 'di dmigs bsal gyi phyal ba ma red ba?"*). mKhan-po: "It is talking about it from the opposite side. *dang por rig pa'i rtsal shar; shar nas rang gi ngo bo'i sprul (?), rtsal rdzogs, de nas bstan (?) pa rtogs (?) kyi red ba? bltas bas 'di ga re zer na, rnam rtog sgyu 'phrul (?) thams cad khor rang yal na, de bas che ba'i rkyen mi thub zer. rkyen mi thub zer na, dper na, rig pa'i rtsal shar nas, rtsal shar ba rtag tu ngo shes nas, rtsal rdzogs nas, de nas rtsal gyi nang la shar bzhag rgyu bsam pa kho rang rang bzhin rnam rtog sgyu 'phrul thams cad rang bzhin de nas rang yal 'gro dgos red zer.... 'di rang yal 'gro du bsam pa, 'dod chags zhe sdang khong khro ga re skyes pa yin na, rdzogs chen gyi rig pa'i rtsal ma gtogs so sor nus pa gang byed kyi mi 'dug. de gas las gang yang bsags kyi mi 'dug. rtsal ma rdzogs par bltas pas, rnam rtog sgyu 'phrul thams cad yal nas 'gags (?) bzos na, 'dod chags zhe sdang khong khro nga rgyal la sogs pa thub byed skyes kyi mi 'dug, rkyen thub kyi mi 'dug."*

---

[184] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 30, 1995): *"rnam rtog sgyu 'phrul shar ba de rig pa'i rtsal ma rtogs na, rang yal du grol ma thub. rang yal grol ma thub na, rang ma yal red ba? rang ma yal na, de nas thad kar ma chod pas, rig pa kho rang gi rtsal da ga rang thad kar rig pa'i ngo bo thag ma chod, rig pa'i ngo la grol ma thub."*

[185] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 30, 1995): *"'o de red shags. ngo shes, rtsal rdzogs, rang yal du grol yag 'di spyir btang rdzogs chen gyi gnas skabs su nyams len byed yag gi gnas skabs su gal chen po dpe red zer. rang snang ma shes na, phyal ba rang ka ma chags (?), rtsal ma rdzogs de che bas rkyen mi thub, rang ma yal na, thad kar thag cod ma thub. 'di sgum 'gag chen po yin no zer.*

[186] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 30, 1995): *"de'ang rig pa rang shar red ba? rdzogs chen gyi rig pa rang shar ba la sgo ma 'gags pa. sgo ma 'gag pa'i sgo nas rang shar la zer. 'dod blo bde bde po med par zer na, rdzogs chen gyi rig pa las rig pa'i rtsal phyi logs pa'i dngos po, de nas rnam rtog sgyu 'phrul la sogs pa gang shar na yang, gang shar ba de rig pa'i rtsal yin pa so so'i thag bcad, ngo shes, rtsal rdzogs na, gang ma par (?) rnam rtog sgyu 'phrul dang phyi snang ga re shar na yang blo bde'i rang bzhin bde po bde rkyang yong dgos red zer. bde po kho rang med na zer, blo bde bde po med par, de nas phyal yas rang babs su ma yengs pa la zer. rig pa rang shar la 'dod blo bde bde po yong dgos red zer. yin na'ang rig pa rang shar la 'dod blo bde bde po kho rang med na, phyal yas rang babs su ma yengs ba la mi rtsol bar bzhag zer. yang na phyal yas phar 'khyams song ba nang bzhin red, 'khyams song ba 'dra po 'dug. phyal yas 'di, phar 'khyams song ba 'dra po'i phyal yas 'di kho rang gang shar ba nang bzhin rang babs su ma yengs par bzhag zer. ma yengs par bzhag pa la yin na'ang rtsol sgrub dang 'bad rtsol gang yang mi 'dug. 'di bzhag bzo na, rig pa rang shar kho rang gi nang la 'dod blo bde bde po gnas thub kyi red zer."*

[187] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 30, 1995): *"gnad pa'i chos ga re red zer na, bde ba 'dod pa 'di red. bde ba 'dod pa'i sems 'di, gnod pa'i chos red. 'di spangs dgos red."*

[188] In *gnas lugs* 57.1 read *rang yin gzhan min* for *rang yin gzhan yin* according to *Tshig don mdzod* **get.**In *khyung chen* 384.6 the text reads *rang min gzhan min.* Thus there are many possibilities for interpreting this line. I tend to find the line from the *khyung chen* itself the most plausible in light of the arguments made throughout Longchenpa's text, although the version in *gnas lugs* can also make sense.

[189] This is an extremely awkward passage. A much better reading would be *mi shar mi gnas ma grol chos med pas* because this would be parallel to both the previous line, and the explanation and explanatory passages cited below.

[190] Bodhicitta (*byang chub sems*) may be interpreted, as it nearly always is in a tantric context, as

semen, which is always to be bound, confined through certain yogic practices. Hence, although grammatically this sentence reads "...the enlightening mind *is* the confining...", here there definitely seems to be a play on words whereby one can read the sentence in the following manner: "...The enlightening mind is confined within the range of immutable reality." It should also be mentioned, in this connection, that the term "Range of immutable reality" (*mi 'gyur chos nyid ngang*) decidedly evokes the image of a dark, fertile, nuturing space, i.e., the womb or vagina. Hence, the enlightening mind (semen) is confined within the range of immutable reality (i.e., the vagina). This passage and others like it can be read as aestheticizing certain tantric themes.

This line can be read in still another way, i.e., "...[All pennomena] are confined within the range of immutable reality *which is* the enlightening mind." This reading is supported by the passage from the *kun byed rgyal po* cited below.

191 It is ambiguous whether this line refers to the 'ordinary' ten natures, in which case the idea presented is that dimension of awareness is devoid of striving and accomplishment through the ten natures, or whether instead it refers to the Great Perfection version of the natures, in which case it would mean something like: The absence of striving and accomplishment is revealed through the Great Perfection version of the ten natures.

192 /ri Si?ha, *khyung chen mkha' lding* in *Bi ma sNying thig*, part 2, in *sNying Thig Ya bZhi*, Vol. 8, 386.2-5, (New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang, and L. Tashi, 1971)

193 For discussions of the ten natures see Neumaier-Dargyay, *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind*, pp. 36-38; K. Lipman and M. Peterson, trans., *You are the Eyes of the World* (Novato CA: Lotsawa, 1987), pp. 2-4, 34-35. It appears that these ten natures pertain specifically and exclusively to tantra. It is unclear, however, whether these ten are exclusive to the Great Perfection.

194 For a translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind*, p. 73. (Tibetan, page 32.2-4)

195 For a translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, The Sovereign All-Creating Mind, pp. 158-159 (Tibetan pages 141.1-142.1).

196 Alternatively: "One is not able to view oneself by oneself."

197 In this line *bsrungs pas mi thub rang gi sems mi khegs*,there seem to be two main interpretations. Taken in a negative way, it is like your own mind's distortions are not going to be controlled by these artificial boundaries that you set up, and therefore your own

dualistic mind is not going to be blocked up (*khegs*) in this way; protection of vows just makes its disgusting expression alittle more palatable. Since this mind is self-emergent primordial knowing, this whole issue of boundaries is crazy. Or you could take it as indicating that your own mind is not something to be blocked up—it is the source, the flow.

[198] The discussion of meditation and sādhana practice at first seems incongruous in the context of this presentation. However it follows in the sense that the mental construction and absorbtion of visualizations of elaborate palaces etc. is the ultimate sand-castle building and destroying. Furthermore, the very next line describes what a yogin should do in the meditative context.

[199] *khyung chen mkha' lding*, 386.5-6.

[200] For a translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind*, p. 138 (Tibetan page 115.6-7).

[201] For a translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind*, pp.156-157 (Tibetan pages 138.2-139.1).

[202] For a translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind*, p. 148 (Tibetan page 128.6-8).

[203] The seven branches of enlightenment (*sapta-bodhyaṅga, byang chub yan lag bdun*): (1) Mindfulness (*dran pa yang dag byang chub kyi yan lag, smṛtisambodhyaṅga*); (2) doctrinal analysis (*chos rab tu rnam par 'byed pa, dharmapravicaya*); (3) perserverance (*brtson 'grus, virya*); (4) delight (*dga' ba, priti*); (5) mental and physical refinement (*shin tu sbyangs pa, praśrabdhi*); (6) contemplation (*ting 'dzin, samādhi*); and (7) equanimity (*btang snyoms, upek?ā*). See Dorje and Kapstein, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Vol. 2* (Boston: Wisdom, 1991), p. 153.

[204] In root text 7.7 read ***da** ni ati snying po'i rnal 'byor pas* for ***de** ni ati snying po'i rnal 'byor pas* according to *gnas lugs* 62.6.

[205] Another possible translation of these lines is: "When you are a child, there are the things of games (toys?), and when you are an old person things just naturally tire you out."

[206] It seems that this line and others like it throughout this portion of the text can be interpreted in either of two ways: First, the ten natures (*rang bzhin bcu*) can be interpreted as doctrines propounded by the vehicles from anu-yoga and below, and as such practitioners of Great Perfection should not stress themselves out over them. On te other hand, this line could be read: "...abide without stressing out *by means of* the the ten natures according to the Great Perfection (i.e., the *absence* of the ten natures of the lower vehicles)."

[207] For a translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind*,

pp.146-147 (Tibetan pages 126.1-127.6).

208 *kun byed* 126.5 reads *de yis bdag gzhan kun* ***gyis*** *don mi* ***byed*** for *de yis bdag gzhan kun* ***gyi*** *don mi 'byed*...... This reading would be something like: "therefore (*de yis*), no purpose is served (*don mi byed*) by all [the artificial distinctions such as that between] self and other."

209 *kun byed* 126.7 reads *nga* ***yi*** *don byas gzhan gyis bya mi dgos* for *nga* ***yis*** *don byas gzhan gyis bya mi dgos.* This would render the translation: "My purposes do not need to be accomplished by anything (anyone?) else."

210 For a translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, *The Sovereign All-Ceating Mind,* p.150 (Tibetan page 130.4-6).

211 *khyung chen mkha' lding* 386.6.

212 For an English translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind,* p. 123 (Tibetan page 97).

213 For an English translation of this passage, see Neumaier-Dargyay, pp. 133-134 (Tibetan pages 109.6-110.4).

214 This line appears incongruous given the fact that normally the yogi of the Great Perfection is exhorted to remain within such a state of non-conceptual equality. Here there is the mild imperative not to do, and such a reading is also found in the *kun byed* itself. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso rGya-mtsho (June 1, 1995) offers the following interpretaton of the line: "*'di yin sa red. dper na "kye sems dpa' chen po rang sems grub 'dod na, 'dod pa med pas grub pa med pa'i phyir." rang sems zer ba 'di ma rig pa'i sems, ma rig blo bur ba'i sems. ma rig blo bur ba'i sems 'dod pa med pas, so sor 'dod pa med bzhin du grub pa med pa'i phyir. ma rig blo bur ba'i sems 'dod pa med bzhin du grub pa 'di rtog med mnyam pa nyid du gnas par byed kyi ma red zer. de med na, rtog med mnyam pa nyid la gnas par byed zer dgos kyi red ba?*"

215 This passage in *khyung chen* 380.2-380.5.

216 A more extensive version of this same passage has already been cited at 40.1-40.4.

217 Reading ***rtogs*** for ***rtog.***

218 Alternative reading: "You transcend the domain of grasping at whether or not things are produced."

219 In the commentary 73.3 read *kun la* ***bzla'o*** for *kun la* ***'das so*** according to the root verses 10.2.

220 Reading *theg* ***brgyad*** for *theg* ***rgya.***

221 In the commentary 75.5, read *phyal* ***yas*** *nyid* for *phyal* ***las*** *nyid* according to root text 10.5.

222 Another possible translation of this line might read: "You are perfected (*chub*) within

reality—the enlightening mind—in one fell swoop (*'ub*)."

[223] The idea seems to be that since normal rules do not apply in this realm of simplicity, usual strategies designed to control the environment and its elemental forces such as rites of hindering malevolent powers or propitiating benevolent ones, are similarly irrelevant.

[224] This passage is from *khyung chen* 383.6-384.1.

[225] In *gnas lugs* 80.4, I am reading ***rang bsal*** for *rang* ***gsal*** according to *khyung chen* 383.6.

[226] In *gnas lugs* 80.4, I am reading ***gegs*** *gnyis* for *'****gag*** *gnyis* according to *khyung chen* 383.6.

[227] Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso (May 26, 1995) identifies the "the types of encounter" (*thug phrad rnam gsum*) in the following way: *"spyir btang yul dbang shes gsum zer gyi 'dug: yul, dbang po, shes pa.. de nas kho rang thug phrad. yul dang dbang po dang shes pa de gsum mtshan ma thug pa yang med na reg pa zer gyi red ba? 'phrad pa dang thug pa don gcig pa red ba? yul la rol pa'i 'gag zer ba 'di yul dbang po shes pa gsum ka yang rang gi ngo bo nyid kyis rang bzhin ma grub na, yul lnga gzugs la sogs pa 'gag sa red zer."*

[228] In *gnas lugs* 83.3, I am reading ***kun*** *du 'bar* for ***gun*** *du 'bar*.

[229] See *kun byed* 51.6-52.1.

[230] In 99.3, I am reading ***chen*** *po* for ***men*** *po* according to Tarthang Tulku's edition.

[231] In 101.2, I am reading ***gnyid*** for ***nyid***.

[232] Another possible reading of this line: "Through sickness, phenomena are experienced as becoming weaker."

[233] This passage found in *kun byed* 18.2-18.7.

[234] In *gnas lugs* 126.3 I am reading *nga* ***mi*** *ltos* for *nga* ***ni*** *ltos* in accordance with the remaining verses in this citation.

[235] In *gnas lugs* 133.3, I am reading *bstan cing thos* ***pas*** for *bstan cing thos* ***pa*** according to the same passage cited earlier.

[236] *kun byed* 216.5-216.7.

[237] *kun byed* 60.5-60.6.

[238] *kun byed* 121.4-122.2.

[239] In *gnas lugs* 141.4, I am reading *dka' ba'i* ***ngang*** for *dka' ba'i* ***dang***.

[240] *khyung chen* 378.4.